EPISTEMICS *of* DIVINE REALITY

AN ARGUMENT FOR RATIONAL FIDEISM

DOMENIC MARBANIANG, Ph.D.

Asian Institute of Theology, Bangalore, 2007

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Glossary

ad infinitum – to infinity
advaita – non-duality (of reality)
animism – belief that nature is alive
anubhava – experience
anumana – inference
contingency – dependency
empiricism – theory that truth is empirical
epistemics – epistemology or the study of knowledge
ex nihilo – out of nothing
existentialism – movement concerned with the meaning of existence
fideism – theory that truth is apprehended by faith
foundationalism – theory that there are axiomatic basic beliefs
logical positivism – theory that truth is verifiable
metaphysics – study of the nature of reality
mysticism – belief that reality is apprehended intuitively
necessary being – being who is its own reason for existence
neo-orthodoxy – theological movement that rejected liberal theology
noetic – related to knowledge
non-dualism – Hindu view of reality as non-dual, none other
noumena – (Kantian) reality-as-it-is
occultic – dealing with secret arts like magic and witchcraft
ontology – study of being
panentheism – belief that every creature is a manifestation of God
pantheism – belief that everything is divine
phenomena – (Kantian) reality-as-it-appears
polytheism – belief that there are many gods and goddesses
possibilize – make possible
pragmatism – belief that truth is that which works
pramana – means of arriving at valid knowledge
pramata – knower
pratyaksha – direct perception
rationalism – theory that truth is rational
revelational – concerned with revelation
sabda - verbal testimony, revelation
tabula rasa – blank slate
ultimate reality – that which is the ground of all being
upamana – comparison
voluntarism – theory that sees reality as volitional

INTRODUCTION

"Epistemics of Divine Reality" is a study of the noetic[1]-mechanics involved in the process of knowing God.

Definitions

The term 'Epistemics' was first used by Alvin Goldman (b. 1938) in his book *Epistemics: The Regulative Theory of Cognition* (1978) for his new epistemic theory of knowledge as justified belief and rational belief in light of empirical cognitive science. He recommended that the older term epistemology be replaced by this new term which was far closer to science than that which the earlier term connoted. In modern philosophical parlance, however, 'epistemics' is synonymous with 'epistemology.'

'Divine Reality' is the same as the word 'God.' It does not refer to a particular God of any religion, but refers to the highest conceivable being that the philosophers of religion talk about. Though not always meaning the same, the term 'ultimate reality' is also used in referring to God. 'Reality' refers to the 'what-is-as-it-is-in-itself' of existence. 'Divine Reality' refers to the 'what-is-as-it-is-in-itself' of divine existence. Whether there is such a reality as divine reality is subject to metaphysical investigation. Even as general epistemology is based on the awareness that people claim to know several things about the universe, even so epistemics of divine reality is based on the awareness that people claim to know several things about God. Thus, epistemics of divine reality and metaphysics of divine reality are closely related.

Importance of the Topic

Since knowledge of God is claimed by adherents of several religions, the metaphysics of God becomes a significant field of philosophical research. The similarities and dissimilarities among the various conceptions of God invite serious investigation into the noetic-bases of the conceptions themselves. Bearing in mind the great loss that philosophy can suffer from, in its quest for unified knowledge, if it misses on this important aspect of reality known as divine (if it exists), it becomes imperative for philosophy to set itself to investigating the various sources, nature, scope, and method of knowledge, especially in relation to God. As Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) said, the metaphysical problems of *God, freedom,* and *immortality* are unavoidable; however, it is also improper to begin investigating these concepts without first establishing the

[1] "Noetic" comes from the Greek verb *noeo*, which means "to understand" or "to think." Its noun form *noesis* means "intelligence" or "understanding." "Noetic" thus refers to that which is associated with or requires the use of intelligence; in other words, mind-related. *Cf.* Ronald Nash, *Faith and Reason* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1988), p 21.

certainty of the tool or method used in investigating them. For Kant, the propaedeutic to metaphysics must be a rigorous critique of pure reason. Accordingly, he writes:

> These unavoidable problems set by pure reason itself are *God*, *freedom*, and *immortality*. The science which, with all its preparations, is in its final intention directed solely to their solution is metaphysics; and its procedure is at first dogmatic, that is, it confidently sets itself to this task without any previous examination of the capacity or incapacity of reason for so great an undertaking. Now it does indeed seem natural that, as soon as we have left the ground of experience, we should, through careful enquiries, assure ourselves as to the foundations of any building that we propose to erect, not making use of any knowledge that we possess without first determining whence it has come, and not trusting to principles without knowing their origin. It is natural, that is to say, that the question should first be considered, how the understanding can arrive at all this knowledge *a priori*, and what extent, validity, and worth it may have.[2]

Kant argues that before one can form any metaphysical view, it is important to establish the certainty of knowledge itself. Obviously, unless one is sure that the measuring rod is of standard quality, one cannot be certain whether the measurement attained by means of it is accurate or inaccurate. Likewise, one cannot be certain about a metaphysical result unless one is first certain about the epistemics that governs such a result. Therefore, the epistemics of divine reality becomes an important and engaging field of research.

Traditionally, philosophy is divided into five branches, *viz.*, Logic (analysis of inference), Ethics (study of moral values and rules), Aesthetics (study of beauty and taste), Epistemology (theory of knowledge), and Metaphysics (theory of reality). Metaphysics was further divided into Ontology (nature of being), Cosmology (nature of the world), Psychology (nature of the soul), and Theology (nature of God).[3] As a science of divine reality, theology finds its source of knowledge usually in sanctified tradition and seeks understanding through reason and experience. The origins of any sanctified tradition, however, can either be found in reason, experience, or, as claimed, in revelation.

The Cartesian ideal of mathematical certainty in the theory of knowledge inaugurated the dawn of the modern era in philosophy. It called for an embracing of only what presented itself to the mind so clearly and distinctly that one had no occasion to doubt it.[4] The postmodern world has, however, renounced any such possibility of mathematical and rational certainty in knowledge. The road to this diametrical change was long; dabbling in empiricism, skepticism, positivism,

---

2 Immanuel Kant, *The Critique of Pure Reason*, 2nd edn. (trans. Norman Kemp Smith; http://www.hkbu.edu.hk/~ppp/cpr/toc.html, 1985), p. 46

3 Warren C. Young, *A Christian Approach to Philosophy* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1954), p. 22

4 Hans Küng, *Does God Exist?* (trans. Edward Quinn; New York: Vintage Books, 1980), p. 8

pragmatism, subjectivism, and relativism. All of these shifts in the theory of knowledge have had their effect in theology.

The dawning of the scientific and technological age also inaugurated the age of great theological unrest and skepticism all over the developing world. The belief in the ability of science and reason to unravel the mysteries of the universe has led many to spurn theology as a valid source of knowledge. As a result, theological reflection has not been enjoying the place that science now enjoys. Importantly, however, theology once was regarded as the Queen of Sciences in the universities of the West until secularism took over the reins of public education. The question that needs to be asked, therefore, is whether the empirical scientific method is the only source of true knowledge or whether there is any other source of knowledge that is as valid as the scientific method for knowing truth. Obviously, theology cannot submit to the scientific claim to sovereignty in epistemics of reality. However, if theology needs to prove its place in education as a valid epistemic source or method, it needs to do that by also proving that its methodology is more valid and trustworthy than that of science; or at least that it goes beyond science in a valid and meaningful way. As Wayne Proudfoot puts it:

> When a question is raised about the authority or dispensability of the idea of God or of an ultimate point of reference,… functional criteria alone will not serve to establish it in such a way as to enable it to fulfill those functions and to provide an object of loyalty and a critical perspective…. Theology must somehow reconstitute itself as genuine inquiry.[5]

As has been seen, the question also arises as to how the validation of theological epistemics relates to 'the shaping of other modes of inquiry, especially scientific knowledge, which often still seems to go unchallenged as the ultimate paradigm of human rationality?'[6] The Christian theologian is, of course, able to include the scientific approach in his methodology. However, theologians from most of the major religions would agree that science is incapable of discovering the truth of God. For instance, the *Advaitin* considers all scientific knowledge as related to the phenomenal world and, thus, incapable of apprehending ultimate reality. He, however, does not repudiate its practical value in phenomenal epistemics. The protagonist of science, on the other hand, is exclusively tied to his method, considering it as being final and perfect. The question that needs to be asked is: Can the scientist consider theology as a source of data in his methodology? Significant, however, is the question related to the tools of verification. Should science accept theology as its judge or should theology accept science as its judge? Or should they both agree on some criterion by which their positions in the epistemic platform are to be ascertained? Or are their tools of verification quite different from each other? Philosophy here comes to rescue as the ground on which both science and theology can dialogue. A theologian

---

[5] as quoted by J. Wentzel Van Huyssteen, *Essays in Postfoundationalist Theology* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1997), p. 11

[6] *Ibid*, p. 12

cannot overlook the importance of philosophy as such. Kai Nielson points out: "Philosophical analysis itself properly understood gives us a solid intellectual ground for rejecting the dominance of philosophy over religion and theology, and for rejecting as incoherent any attempt to set forth a philosophically grounded negation of all theology."[7] In other words, the rejection of philosophy by religion or the rejection of theology by philosophy are all consequences of philosophical analysis itself.

Modern research has confirmed the role of faith in the act of knowing. One innovative approach towards knowledge of God is known as Cognitive Voluntarism, the view that humans believe in something not because of evidence but because of desire or will.[8] However, the role of reason in providing a sure and stable basis for belief must not be overlooked. Though mathematical certainty might not be expected of everything; yet, some kind of rational certainty cannot be disregarded in matters of ultimate truth.

[7] Kai Nielson, "The Primacy of Philosophical Theology" (http://theologytoday.ptsem.edu/jul1970/v27-2-article3.htm)

[8] James Ross, "Reason and Reliance: Adjusted Prospects for Natural Theology" (http://www.w3.org/TR/REC-html40).

Chapter 1

CLASSICAL SOURCES OF DIVINE KNOWLEDGE

By classical sources is meant those sources that were recognized by the various traditions of philosophy long before the emergence of the modern era. The traditional tendency in religion has been towards faith, while the tendency in philosophy has been towards reason, experience, or intuition. However, there has not been a complete polarization on any one source. The role of other sources in acquiring knowledge has been acknowledged by the different schools. Yet, when coming to divine knowledge, some have chosen to be very exclusive about their own recognized epistemic source. For instance, the Vedanta position rejects all sense-experience as false and misrepresentative of the Absolute. However, an inter-relation of the epistemic sources, epistemic theories, and metaphysical claims of divine reality may be admitted. Yet, both the epistemic and metaphysical theories are highly dependent on the source that is accepted as authoritative in any given case. Following is a discussion of the sources of divine knowledge followed by a discussion of the relationship between epistemic sources, theories, and divine knowledge:

Sources of Divine Knowledge

In both the East and the West, the typical source of theology has been the religious tradition. Though there were some revolts against the established traditions, for instance the 6th century BC protests of Jainism and Buddhism who refused a distinct logical status to tradition in religious epistemology,[9] the value of religious knowledge through some reliable traditional source was not totally discarded or invalidated. The Enlightenment of the eighteenth century lifted the status of reason over revelation for sometime. However, the increasing awareness of the impossibility of always believing anything on the basis of sufficient reason alone has facilitated the shift in epistemics from reason alone to faith in general consensus. This kind of faith is not conceived to be a leap in the dark but is considered to be based on valid reasons as to why the source of knowledge can be believed. In *Reason and Reliance: Adjusted Prospects for Natural Theology*, James Ross writes:

> …faith has been rehabilitated. Faith is willing reliance on others thought better placed to know, as well as willing reliance on the regularities we find in nature and people, to indicate what we should believe. Faith is undeniably a source of knowledge, often more efficient than finding out for oneself, as the telephone book

[9] M. Hiriyanna, *Indian Philosophy* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 1993), p. 209

> makes clear…. In fact, trust is the very fabric of social conviction and the golden thread of science.[10]

Some others have emphasized on faith in order to understand as a venture of trust based on self-evidencing faith. This is the stand-point of evangelical theology.[11] This view is based on the theological view that the fall has rendered human reason as corrupt and incapable to perceive things of God. Once the will is converted by the Spirit of God, reason could be used to understand faith.[12] So it is not faith based on reason but reason that consents to faith that matters where knowledge of God is concerned.

Anyway, the indispensable role of revelation encoded in some book or tradition is given an important place in classical epistemology of God. This, however, does not mean that there have not been attempts on other means to divine knowledge. For instance, the 19th century theory of evolution played a significant role in the development of trends like Process Theology, New Age philosophy, and the Theosophical Movement. However, the importance of revelation or tradition was accepted within most of these movements. Thus, there have been differences of emphasis in epistemology of religion, especially when doing the epistemics of God or divine reality. Following is a brief account of the various acknowledged sources of knowledge in India and the West:

Sources of Knowledge in Indian Philosophy

The sources of knowledge in Indian philosophy are known as the *pramanas.* According to Hiriyanna, the word *pramana* signifies the essential means of arriving at valid knowledge or prama. The object known is described as prameya; and the knower, pramata.[13] Swami Atmananda calls these pramanas the 'means of knowledge.'[14] There are six orthodox schools of Indian philosophy: Nyaya, Vaisesika, Sankhya, Yoga, Uttara Mimamsa (Advaita), and Purva Mimamsa. There are six heterodox schools of Indian philosophy – heterodox, because of their rejection of the Vedas: Charvaka, the four Buddhist schools (Sautrantika, Vaibhasika, Yogacara, and Madhyamika), and Jainism.

All the schools of Indian philosophy accept at least two pramanas as genuine: *pratyaksha* or perception and *anumana* or inference. A third important pramana in almost all the Indian schools of philosophy is *sabda* or verbal testimony (often referring to the scriptures). The various schools differ as to the place of sabda among the other pramanas. The Buddhist denies to sabda the

---

[10] James Ross, *Reason and Reliance: Adjusted Prospects for Natural Theology* (http://www.w3.org/TR/REC-html40)
[11] Donald G. Bloesch, *A Theology of Word & Spirit* (Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1992), p. 58
[12] *Ibid*, p. 58
[13] M. Hiriyanna, *Indian Philosophy* , p. 177
[14] Swami Atmananda, "Six Pramanas" (http://www.vmission.org/vedanta/articles/pramanas.htm)

logical status implied by designating it a pramana, but considers it to belong under the class of inference,[15] since, they argue, the ascertainment of the meaning of a verbal statement in no way differs from the inferential process.[16] The Vaisesika also agrees with this point of view. However, the Nyaya, Sankhya, Yoga, and Advaita regard sabda as a distinct pramana in itself. Advaita Vedanta accepts, in addition to the above three pramanas, three more pramanas, *viz.*, *upamana* (comparison), *arthapatti* (postulation), and *anupalabdhi* (non-apprehension).[17] All the six pramanas are also recognized by the Kumarila Bhatta school of Purva Mimamsa.[18] The Nyaya and Vaisesika schools admit four pramanas, *viz.*, pratyaksha, anumana, sabda, and upamana.[19] The Sankhya and Yoga schools accept only three, *viz.*, pratyaksha, anumana, and sabda.[20] An explanation of all the six pramanas is as follows:

Pratyaksha (Perception). Perception refers to the direct and immediate cognition of internal and external objects. In the Nyaya-Vaisesika system, the manas (which is not to be confused with the mind since the manas is inert[21]) acts as the instrument and pathway of knowledge. Because of the perfect cooperation of the manas with the self in the cognitive process, the resultant knowledge, at the simple atomic level, is always error-free. The simple atomic level, called the nirvikalpaka, is the preliminary level at which perception is atomic, isolated, and uncharacterized. That is to say, it is the level before all the units of the reflective picture of an object are combined to form the picture of the object. The process of compounding the units separately given is known as the savikalpaka.[22] Error may result at the savikalpaka level, but the data of nirvikalpaka pratyaksha are error-free. However, all knowledge finds its basis in the objective world. This view of the Nyaya-Vaisesika proceeds from its philosophy of pluralistic realism.

The epistemology of Sankhya-Yoga is similar to Nyaya-Vaisesika. This is obviously so because of its conception of the world as pluralistic (as far as selves are concerned) or dualistic (as far as the ultimate entities are concerned).[23] The picture of the world that one has is real and not illusive. Its view of pratyaksha is, therefore, similar to that of Nyaya-Vaisesika. However, it differs from the latter with regard to the certitude of knowledge. The equivalent of the manas in the Sankhya-Yoga view is the buddhi which unlike the manas is not passive and inert but active and determinative in the processing of knowledge. The resultant picture may, therefore, not

[15] M. Hiriyanna, *Indian Philosophy* , p. 209
[16] *Ibid*, p. 257
[17] Swami Atmananda, “Six Pramanas” (http://www.vmission.org/vedanta/articles/pramanas.htm)
[18] M. Hiriyanna, *Indian Philosophy* , p. 318
[19] *Ibid,* p. 252ff
[20] *Ibid,* p. 292
[21] *Ibid,* p. 230
[22] *Ibid,* p. 251
[23] *Ibid,* p. 270

always be a true copy of the real.[24] The buddhi is the abode of several impressions from the past that interfere with the present data, thus sometime producing error. Pure knowledge is only possible after purification of the buddhi through rigorous self-discipline. Until then all knowledge is partial and incomplete.

The Mimamsaka theory of knowledge, according to both Kumarila and Prabhakara, the two schools within the system, is realistic. Accordingly, all knowledge points to some object outside itself.[25] Its view of pratyaksha is similar to that of the Nyaya-Vaisesika. The manas is considered to be one of the senses whose cooperation is indispensable for all knowledge.[26] Immediate knowledge is through perception (pratyaksha) and results from the contact of the senses with the objects of knowledge.[27]

The Advaita view concurs with the above view.[28] However, its idealistic non-dualism prevents it from regarding such perceptive knowledge as ultimately real. Nevertheless, such perceptive knowledge is not also unreal or illusive. It is real within its context of the waking state of consciousness. Perceptive knowledge is only possible in the waking state, since it is only in this state that the senses are in contact with objects thus giving rise to knowledge. Consequentially, knowledge in the dreaming state is apparent while knowledge in the waking state is empirical.[29] Empirical knowledge is practically useful and indispensable for daily living. However, it is not salvific. The truly liberating knowledge is the realization of non-dualism, which involves the dissolution of all subject-object relationships; thus, the invalidation of perception (pratyaksha) as source of ultimate knowledge. As a result, perception serves only empirical purposes and is unreliable as source of metaphysical knowledge.[30]

The heterodox school of materialism, the Charvaka, accepts only pratyaksha as the sole means of valid knowledge.[31] The Buddhist schools can be divided into two groups for their differences of view about pratyaksha: the realist and the idealist schools. The Hinayana ("Lesser Vehicle") belong to the realist school. The Mahayana ('Greater Vehicle," the liberal sect) belongs to the idealist school. The Hinayana hold that knowledge corresponds to objects outside and independently of knowledge. The Mahayana deny such objects altogether.[32] Of the Hinayana schools (the realists), the Vaibhasika believe that objects are directly perceived while the Sautrantika believe that objects are known through their representations and not directly. The

[24] *Ibid*, pp. 288-290
[25] *Ibid*, p. 313
[26] *Ibid*, p. 304
[27] *Ibid*, pp. 303-304
[28] *Ibid*, p. 357
[29] *Ibid*, p. 351
[30] *Ibid*, p. 358
[31] *Ibid*, p. 189
[32] *Ibid*, p. 201

argument of the Sautrantika is that since all objects are momentary because of the ubiquity of change, all perception is only of the past. There is always a difference of at least an instance between the object and the perception of it. The star one sees, for instance, is an impression of the past: the real star might differ greatly from this impression or might have even disappeared.[33] Of the idealist schools, the Yogachara is subjectivist and holds that all perception of external objects is false and that all knowledge arises from within. As a matter of fact, the only reality is the succession of ideas; even the idea of a self is false. Neither the knower nor the known but only knowledge exists.[34] The Madhyamika school of Buddhistic idealism, however, rejects even this subject-series as real. It rejects the ultimate reality of both the internal and the external: nothing is real; therefore, its theory is known as sunya-vada (the void theory or nihilism). Perception, therefore is only empirical useful and relatively true. It has no metaphysical validity or usage.[35] Thus, perception (pratyaksha) cannot be a reliable guide to ultimate truth in the idealist schools of Buddhism.

Every school of Indian philosophy, except the Charvaka, agrees about the insufficiency of perception to gain knowledge of ultimate reality. They also consent that errors are possible in the process of perception, though they differ on the nature and source of such errors. All of them also agree about the empirical worth of perception for daily existence. However, perception is not considered as a reliable guide for metaphysical considerations.

Anumana (Inference). The word *anumana* literally means “knowing after” and refers to the knowledge that arises from another knowledge,[36] that is to say, by means of inference. The resultant knowledge is, therefore, said to be mediate and indirect. There are slight differences in the conception of inference among the various schools of Indian philosophy. *Vyapti* is the word for inductive relation between any two things or events. The Buddhist accepts causality (cause and effect) and essentiality (identity of essence) as the only basis for inductive generalization. Therefore, the proposition ‘All animals with cloven hoofs have horns,’ is not accepted as a valid generalization because it neither involves a causal relation nor an essential relation.[37] The Nyaya-Vaisesika concept of inference, however, is much broader compared to the Buddhist concept. It accepts the proposition ‘All animals with cloven hoofs have horns’ as valid and as involving a necessary relation between ‘cloven hoof’ and ‘horns.’[38] The Nyaya-Vaisesika also extends the scope of inference to include analogical reasoning. Thus, the necessity of a sentient agent to

[33] *Ibid*, pp.201-202
[34] *Ibid*, p. 205
[35] *Ibid*, pp. 207-208
[36] Swami Atmananda, “Six Pramanas” (http://www.vmission.org/vedanta/articles/pramanas.htm)
[37] M. Hiriyanna, *Indian Philosophy* , pp. 199-201
[38] *Ibid*, p. 254

wield an axe proves the necessity of an agent, the self, to use the manas. Such extension of the scope of inference was questioned by the Charvaka.[39] The typical Indian syllogism is as follows:

1. Yonder mountain has fire.
2. For it has smoke.
3. Whatever has smoke has fire, e.g. an oven.
4. Yonder mountain has smoke such as is invariably accompanied by fire.
5. Therefore, yonder mountain has fire.[40]

The above syllogism reveals three steps in the induction process.

1. Perceptual evidence - We see smoke on the hill
2. Invariable concomitance - Wherever there is smoke there is fire, as seen in kitchen.
3. Conclusion - Therefore the hill has fire.[41]

The Nyaya-Vaisesika employs analogical reasoning, as inference, to provide a rational argument for the existence of God.[42] Udayana, for instance, argues from the effect to cause, from order to law-giver, and from moral government of the world to the governor of the world.[43]

Upamana (Comparison). This pramana, recognized as a distinct pramana by the Nyaya, Mimamsaka, and Advaitin, refers to the process of knowing the similarity of something to a new thing by noticing that the new thing is similar to the former. For instance, a person who is familiar with the cow casually comes across a gavaya (wild cow), notices its similarity to the former, and discovers that the cow is also similar to the gavaya. This recollected cow is known through upamana.[44] Thus upamana is defined by the Mimamsakas and the Advaitins as the process by which the knowledge of A's similarity to B is gained from the perception of B's similarity to A, which has been seen elsewhere.[45]

Upamana has often been confused with analogical reasoning. The Nyaya, the Mimamsakas, and the Advaitins argue that it cannot be treated as belonging to the class of inference, since the pramana does not need any knowledge of inductive relation (vyapti) as in inference. The knowledge of similarity is gained by simultaneous or successive observation of A and B.[46] The

[39] *Ibid*, p. 255
[40] *Ibid*, p. 256
[41] Swami Atmananda, "Six Pramanas" (http://www.vmission.org/vedanta/articles/pramanas.htm)
[42] M. Hiriyanna, *Indian Philosophy* , p. 255
[43] *Ibid,* p. 243
[44] *Ibid,* pp. 319-320
[45] Swami Atmananda, "Six Pramanas" (http://www.vmission.org/vedanta/articles/pramanas.htm)
[46] M. Hiriyanna, *Indian Philosophy* , p. 320

metaphysical factor behind this view is the concept of similarity (sadrsya) as dual, the similarity of A to B being distinct from that of B to A.[47] According to the Advaitins, upamana helps to understand the invisible attributes of God (Brahman) through comparison with visible attributes of physical objects. For instance, Brahman is said to be resplendent as the sun: his self-luminosity is understood in comparison to the luminosity of the sun.[48]

Arthapatti (Postulation or Presumption). This refers to the process of arriving at knowledge of something by means of postulating or making an assumption regarding it to explain its phenomenon. For instance, if a fat man says he doesn't eat in the day, the assumption that would explain his fatness would be that he eats at night. Similarly, if we know that Devadatta is alive and do not find it at home, we presume that he is somewhere else.[49] Arthapatti is considered to be highly useful in understanding Upanisadic statements like, 'The knower of Self transcends grief.' This leads to the assumption that all grief is false, therefore knowledge destroys it.[50]

Anupalabdhi (Non-apprehension). The word *anupalabdhi* means 'absence of apprehension.'[51] Anupalabdhi is the pramana by which the negation or non-existence of something is known by its absence, and thus its non-apprehensibility. For instance, by not seeing a jar in a certain place, one concludes that the jar is not in that place; by not seeing the teacher in the classroom, one concludes that the teacher is not in the classroom.

Sabda (Verbal Testimony). Sabda means 'word' and generally refers to all oral and written words that conveyed knowledge. This pramana is also called 'apta-vakyas' (statement of a trust-worthy person) and agama (authentic word).[52] Sabda is pramana in its semantic dimension. Thus, unless a sentence possesses definite meaning, it cannot qualify as sabda. Evidently, one owes a greater part of what one knows to other sources than direct perception and inference alone. It would be very difficult to live in this world if only knowledge verified by perception and inference were to be believed in. One, therefore, is forced to rely on the oral or written testimony of others to know about many things. The Buddhist and the Vaisesika treat sabda as belonging to the class of inference, while the Charvaka rejects it altogether as a pramana. The Buddhist and the Vaisesika argue that since the ascertainment of the meaning of a verbal statement in no way differs from the inferential process, the sabda is of the class of inference.[53] The Nyaya, Sankhya, Yoga, Mimamsaka, and the Advaitins give to it the distinct status of a pramana. The concept of sabda as involving all knowledge that comes through verbal communication in oral or written form was a later development. In its earliest conception, sabda referred to the verbal testimony of

[47] *Ibid,* p. 320
[48] Swami Atmananda, "Six Pramanas" (http://www.vmission.org/vedanta/articles/pramanas.htm)
[49] M. Hiriyanna, *Indian Philosophy* , p. 320
[50] Swami Atmananda, "Six Pramanas" (http://www.vmission.org/vedanta/articles/pramanas.htm)
[51] M. Hiriyanna, *Indian Philosophy* , p. 321
[52] Swami Atmananda, "Six Pramanas" (http://www.vmission.org/vedanta/articles/pramanas.htm)
[53] M. Hiriyanna, *Indian Philosophy* , p. 257

tradition[54] or the scriptures. The necessity of considering sabda as a distinct pramana seems to have emerged from the recognition of the vastness of philosophical literature already present by the time the pramanas were being formulated and of their undeniable contribution to philosophy. However, the apparent conflict among the traditional pronouncements necessitated the development of interpretations that formed into different systems. Thus, eventually, sabda signified not tradition in general but systematized tradition.

The heterodox and the orthodox schools differ in their conception of sabda. The heterodox maintain that knowledge through sabda includes all knowledge that is accessible by humans; if not by perception and inference then by a higher faculty, which may be termed as insight or intuition or whatever. On the other hand, the orthodox maintain that sabda refers to revelation, which is knowledge not gained by human endeavor. This distinction is based on their epistemic conceptions of Reality: to the heterodox the realm of human experience exhausts Reality, while for the orthodox it does not. For the orthodox, Reality transcends nature and, therefore, can be known through only by means of sruti or revelation. However, not everything claiming revelatory status could be accepted as sabda. The Indian thinkers delineated certain criteria to judge the validity of sabda.

The first of such criteria is that the revealed truth should be new or extra-empirical (alaukika), i.e. otherwise unattained or unattainable.[55] For instance, the authority of revelation is not necessary to certify that heat destroys cold; this can be certified by common experience. This, however, does not mean that revelation is totally out of touch with all that is human, for it is in terms understandable to humans that revelation comes. The second criterion is that what is revealed should not be contradicted (abadhita) by any of the other pramanas.[56] The revealed word must be logically consistent and must cohere with what is known by the other pramanas. Thus, though revelation can be trans-rational, it cannot be anti-rational. The third condition is that reason should foreshadow or anticipate what revelation teaches.[57] Thus, though reason is incapable of discovering supernatural facts, it can at least anticipate the facts so that when they are revealed they are found as not contradicting reason. And though revelation was considered to be necessary for the apprehension of spiritual truths, it was not expected to be contrary to reason or the other pramanas. In his *Malvikagnimitra*, Kalidas writes that great men accept views only after analysis and evaluation, but the dull-headed lose track of the way through credulity to others' beliefs.[58]

[54] *Ibid*, p. 178
[55] *Ibid*, p. 180
[56] *Ibid*, p. 181
[57] *Ibid*, p. 181
[58] *Santaha Parikshyanyatardbhajante, Mudhaha Parapratyaneya Buddhiha*, as quoted by S. Radhakrishnan, *Satya Ki Khoj* (trans. S. Gopal; Delhi: Rajpal and Sons, 1996), p. 6

Sources of Knowledge in Western Philosophy

The valid sources of knowledge, according to Western philosophy, can be enumerated as being chiefly two, *viz.* reason and experience. Experience includes sense perception and introspection.[59] Mathematical and logical propositions such as '$3^3 = 27$,' 'No straight lines are curved,' and 'Nothing can be in two separate locations simultaneously,' are derived from reason. Propositions such as 'I hope that my roommate will meet me at 4:00,' 'I'm in pain,' etc. reflect knowledge derived from introspection. Propositions like 'I'm now sitting in my room,' 'I see a red rose,' etc. reflect knowledge derived from sense perception.[60]

Another notable source of knowledge is considered to be memory. Propositions like 'I saw him in the railway station yesterday,' and 'My friend promised to meet me at 4:00,' reflect knowledge derived from memory. Such knowledge is called as memory belief.[61] The value of memory in the cognitive process cannot be disregarded, for it is that which binds the streaming units of knowledge into some meaningful whole. However, it is reason or experience that functions as the primal source of knowledge; therefore, Western epistemology divides into two rival schools of rationalism and empiricism. Rationalism is the theory that some ideas or concepts are derived from reason alone independent of experience. Empiricism, on the other hand, holds that all ideas or concepts originate in experience and that truth must be established by reference to experience alone.[62] Both the theories will be looked into in this chapter.

There are also other sources of knowledge that play an important role in the acquisition of knowledge. However, philosophers disagree as to the reliability of each of the sources. Ultimately, the struggle is between reason and experience. Following is a brief account of the place of reason and experience in Western epistemology:

Reason. Reason may be defined as the faculty of or ability to think[63] or the intellectual faculty by which conclusions are drawn.[64] It is analogous to the Indian *anumana* (inference). As noted earlier, mathematical and logical statements are derived from reason. The act of reasoning, called the argument, may be valid or invalid; the conclusion or statements in the argument may be true or false. Falsehood or truthfulness cannot be predicated of an argument; it can only be predicated of a statement. Likewise, validity or invalidity cannot be predicated of a statement; only

[59] Emmet Barcalow, *Open Questions* (Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1992), p. 118
[60] *Ibid*, p. 116-117
[61] *Ibid*, p. 116-117
[62] Milton D. Hunnex, *Charts of Philosophies and Philosophers* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1986), p. 3
[63] John Hospers, *An Introduction to Philosophical Analysis* (New Delhi: Allied Publishers Limited, 1967), reprint, 2001, p. 133
[64] Maurice Waite (ed.), *The Little Oxford Dictionary* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998, rev. 7th edn.), p. 535

arguments can be referred to as valid or invalid. There are two kinds of arguments: deductive argument and inductive argument.

Deductive argument is an argument in which the conclusion must logically follow from the premises. That is to say, if the premises of the argument are true, the conclusion must also be true, provided the argument is valid. An argument can be valid even though its conclusion is false due to falsity of premises. A valid deductive argument is an argument in which the conclusion follows necessarily from the premises. A sound argument is a deductive argument that is valid and has true premises.[65]

The most common form of deductive argument is the syllogism in which a conclusion is derived from two premises. In Aristotelian logic, one of the premises is called a major premise and the other, a minor premise. The major premise is the premise that contains the major term, i.e., the term that is the predicate of the conclusion (e.g., *man*). The minor premise is the premise that contains the minor term, i.e., the term that is the subject of the conclusion (e.g., *Socrates*).[66] There are basically three kinds of deductive arguments: the categorical argument, the hypothetical argument, and the disjunctive argument.

The categorical argument is the argument which is made up of categorical statements. A categorical statement is that statement which relates a part or class of things to another class (category) of things.[67]. For example,

1. All men are mortal.
2. Socrates is a man.
3. Therefore, Socrates is a man. (Conclusion).

The hypothetical argument is the argument which contains hypothetical or conditional statements. A hypothetical statement is made up of two simpler statements that are conditioned with the words ‘if-then’.[68] The first simple sentence, qualified by *if*, is called the antecedent, and the second simple sentence, qualified by *then*, is called the consequent. For example:

1. If you study (antecedent), then you will pass the exam (consequent).
2. You are studying.
3. Therefore, you will pass the exam.

[65] Patrick J. Hurley, “Introduction to Logic” (http://www2.austincc.edu/rloverin/IntroductiontoLogic.htm)
[66] Robin Smith, “Aristotle’s Logic” (http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/aristotle-logic)
[67] Manuel Velasquez, *Philosophy*, IV edn. (Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1991), p. 43
[68] *Ibid*, p. 47

The disjunctive argument is the argument that contains a disjunctive statement. A disjunctive statement poses alternatives of the form *either X or Y (or both).*[69] Each part of a disjunctive statement is called a disjunct. The disjunctive syllogism, made up of three statements, allows only the negation of any of the disjuncts in the minor premise and not its affirmation. For example,

Either it is raining or the sprinklers are on.

It is not raining (negation).

Therefore, the sprinklers must be on.

The above is a valid disjunctive argument.

But,

Either it is raining or the sprinklers are on.

It is raining.

Therefore, the sprinklers are not on.

The above is an invalid disjunctive argument since there is the possibility for both the disjuncts to be true so as, in the above situation, the sprinklers are also on.

The deductive argument is logically connected throughout (the premises and the conclusion) and, therefore, can be relied on as mathematically perfect. The same is not the case with inductive reasoning, which proceeds from particulars to form a generalization. It must be accepted that not all generalizations are purely rational in origin; therefore, the verification of the inductive connexion of empirical knowledge becomes vital in verifying the truthfulness of the statements in a deductive argument. As far as the few general statements like ‘Every effect has a cause’ and ‘Every object occupies space’ or ‘A=A is not the same as A≠A’ are concerned it is even debatable whether they are derived purely from reason or not; and even if there are any purely rational statements, whether they contain knowledge. The class of knowledge that is not dependent on experience is referred to as *a priori*, and the class of knowledge that is dependent on experience is referred to as *a posteriori.* And so, whether there is any knowledge that originates out of pure reason alone is a matter of controversy. However, if by reason is meant only the act of inference, it can be stated without any doubt that there is a great body of knowledge that originates in reason.

---

[69] *Ibid,* p. 50

Rationalism is the epistemic theory that claims the possibility of knowledge without the aid of sense perception. According to Manuel Velasquez, rationalism is 'the position that reason alone, without the aid of sense information, is capable of arriving at some knowledge, at some undeniable truths.'[70]

Experience. Experience is the Western counterpart of *Pratyaksha* pramana. According to the Webster's Dictionary, experience is 'the observing, encountering, or undergoing of events as they occur in the course of time.'[71] The American Heritage Dictionary defines experience as 'the apprehension of an object, thought, or emotion through the senses or mind.'[72] Experience can be defined as perception of reality through participation in it by means of the senses. The senses can be divided into two categories: external senses and internal senses. The five external sense-faculties help to perceive sound, odour, light, flavour, and touch. The internal senses acquaint us with our 'own internal states (feelings, attitudes, moods, pains, and pleasures), as well as our own mental operations such as thinking, believing, and wondering.'[73] Knowledge through sense-perception is the most obvious kind of knowledge. Sense-experiences force perceptual judgement that gives rise to experiential knowledge. One first perceives a chair – but between the perception of the chair and the forming of the judgement that it is a chair that has been perceived is involved a whole lot of processing of past experience that enables the recognition of the present object.

Empiricism is the school of Western philosophy that claims that all knowledge begins with and derives all of its contents from experience.[74] The English philosopher John Locke compared the human mind to a blank slate, *tabula rasa*, on which experience writes data.[75] The empiricists reject the rationalist' claim of the possibility of some knowledge *a priori*. The empiricist contends that all so called *a priori* knowledge is only analytical and conveys no other knowledge than a tautology. According to strict empiricism even statements such as 'Black cats are black' are only derived from experience and cannot be considered as independent of experience.[76] Logical empiricism, however, admits that such statements are necessary; yet, not synthetic but analytical – the predicate 'black' is contained in the subject 'black cats'; therefore, carrying a necessary entailment. Thus, there can be no synthetic necessary statement. All synthetic statements are empirical in nature. Though such disagreements exist, neither of the schools of epistemology regards itself as exclusive of the other. The role of experience in reasoning as well as reasoning in empirical understanding is recognized by both of the schools.

---

[70] Manuel Velasquez, *Philosophy*, p. 288
[71] *Webster's Dictionary* (New York: Random House, Inc., 1996)
[72] *The American Heritage Dictionary*, 2nd College edn. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1991)
[73] John Hospers, *An Introduction to Philosophical Analysis*, p. 124
[74] Manuel Velasquez, *Philosophy*, p. 294
[75] *Ibid*, p. 295
[76] Milton D. Hunnex, *Charts of Philosophies and Philosophers*, p. 4

Some other sources of knowledge that have been regarded to be highly questionable are culture and tradition, majority opinion, prestige and expert opinion, charismatic authority,[77] instinct, racial memory, Extra-sensory perception, recollection (anamnesis), spiritualism, and occult sources.[78] The reality of spiritualistic and occultic approaches to knowledge is undeniable. But since they involve uncommon means and procedures which are scientifically questionable, they have been left out of discussion here. Authority, of course, is an important source of knowledge. However, Western philosophy doesn't give it much validation because it ultimately leads to the question of how the originating source of authority may be established as indubitable.

Relation of the Sources to Divine Knowledge

The Cartesian search for clarity and certainty in theology defined the scope of relationship between philosophy and theology in the modern era. Thus, the Enlightenment was also called as the 'age of reason.' Rational attempts to validate theological standpoints are also found in Indian philosophy, especially in the Upanishads and the commentaries of Shankaracharya. However, in Indian philosophy, faith and intuitive knowledge stand above reason: the sacred truths viewed as transcending the realm of logic or reason.

Proceeding from the undeniable certainty of the self ('I think, therefore I exist') Rene Descartes (1596-1650) attempted to prove the certainty of God. The liberating effects of the Reformation and the Renaissance revelry in the glory of man[79] provided the environment for the increasing quest for rational validation of faith. As a result, skepticism and agnosticism went on hike. A new class of believers in God who did not rely on the Bible came into being. The Deists regarded reason as superior to religious experience.[80] However, this fervor of reason didn't last for long, for soon its several limitations and debilities were discovered.

In 1689, John Locke (1632-1704), a British philosopher published his great *Essay on Human Understanding*, in which he proposed the empiricist theory that knowledge arises out of experience; the mind begins as a blank slate – a *tabula rasa* – on which sense-experience writes in many ways, until sensation begets memory and memory begets ideas.[81] This epistemic certainly posed a threat to theology though Locke didn't seem to have intended it so. If certainty of knowledge were confined to only data acquired through sense-experience, then belief in the existence of a God unperceived by the senses is certainly questionable. The majority of people

[77] Stanley M. Honer, Thomas C. Hunt, and Dennis L. Okholm, *Invitation to Philosophy* (Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1992), pp.68, 69
[78] James L. Christian, *Philosophy: An Introduction to the Art of Wondering* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1986), pp.171-173
[79] cf. R. Domenic Savio Marbaniang, 'Secularism in India: A Historical Analysis' (Unpublished M.Phil. Thesis, Acts Academy of Higher Education, 2005), pp. 15-30
[80] *Ibid*, p. 31
[81] Will Durant, *The Story of Philosophy* (New York: Pocket Books, 1961), p. 256

believing in any God do not account the reason of their belief to pure sense-experience. Whether God is empirically perceptible or not is a secondary question. The question that needs to be asked is 'Is the existence of God established on the basis of experience or not?' Thus, empiricism removed the basis of certainty for theology. Prior to the development of the empirical approach, there was at least the possibility of establishing belief in God on rational grounds; that is, axioms which were considered undeniable, inborn and *a priori.*[82] For instance, Descartes argued towards the existence of God from the clear and distinct idea of his own existence.[83] But with the rise of empiricism this ground was taken away.

However, Bishop George Berkeley (1684-1753) hoped that theology could be salvaged by opting for a different empirical theory, that of idealism. He argued that all experience only points to ideas of the mind, and that nothing more than the existence of ideas can be proven. His famous proposition, 'to be is to be perceived,' was qualified by the proposition that things exist though not perceived by us because they are continuously perceived by God. Thus, by allowing the possibility of ideas in epistemology, Berkeley also tried to preserve the idea of God. However, Berkeley's weapon against the materialistic overtones of Locke's empiricism was soon to turn on his own theory through another young philosopher.

David Hume (1711-1776) at the age of twenty-six argued in his *Treatise on Human Nature* that the mind as a faculty of knowledge does not exist: only ideas, memories, feelings etc exist. As Will Durant points out, David Hume 'had as effectually destroyed mind as Berkeley had destroyed matter.'[84] The result, religion and philosophy had lost both the rational and the empirical tool to establish the certainty of theological knowledge. Hume wrote:

> If we take in our hands any volume of school metaphysics, for instance, let us ask, 'Does it contain any abstract reasoning concerning quantity or number?' No. 'Does it contain any experimental reasoning concerning matter of fact and existence?' No. Commit it then to the flames, for it can contain nothing but sophistry and illusion.[85]

Thus, both reason and experience became unreliable sources of divine knowledge, to the extent that the existence of God or spirits became highly dubitable with the annulling of metaphysics in Western philosophy. Thankfully for it, Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) came in time to salvage philosophy from self-destruction. He attempted to establish both the validity of reason and experience through his theory of Phenomenalism. Kant showed that there is a body of knowledge that is synthetic and yet present to the mind *a priori*, which the helps the mind to organize all sense-data into forms and categories; thus, making a sense out of the world of experience. However, since the resultant knowledge is not a true copy of the universe but only a mental

[82] *Ibid,* p.256
[83] Manuel Velasquez, *Philosophy,* p. 299
[84] Will Durant, *The Story of Philosophy,* p. 257
[85] as cited by Durant from quote in Royce, *The Spirit of Modern Philosophy,* in *The Story of Philosophy,* p. 258

interpretation of it, one can never know what reality is like. Consequently, knowledge of God based on sense-experience is not reliable since experience itself is conditioned by the forms and categories of the mind, but God is considered to be a being who transcends the forms of intuition, *viz.*, space and time. However, Kant thought that a solution to the problem of Divine existence can be found not in theoretical reason, which studies the objects of knowledge (what *is* there), but in practical reason, which studies the motives of the will (what *ought* to be there).[86] It becomes morally necessary to assume the existence of God. As will be later explained in the thesis, Kant's move makes room for a 'purely rational faith' in Western philosophy.[87] In contemporary philosophy of religion, philosophers like Alvin Plantinga have argued for the immediacy of at least some of our natural knowledge of God.[88]

Reason and experience also had their place in Indian philosophy; though, of course, not always enjoying the place that verbal testimony did. This, since reason was considered to be severely limited in its ability to comprehend Ultimate Reality or God. Even the heterodox schools who chose to retain tradition (sabda) within inference acknowledged that the truth obtained from tradition was not perceptible by mere reason and perception.[89] However, inference and perception did have a role to play in the rational establishment of the knowledge of Divine reality; though, their importance in relation to divine knowledge differed from school to school.

In the Nyaya school of Indian philosophy, the existence of God is established through inference and reason and not through revelation as in the Vedanta.[90] Udayana puts forth several arguments from causality, cosmology, and morality to prove the existence of God.[91] The Sankhya school renders the idea of a God superfluous by interpreting the universe in purely naturalistic terms. But the Yoga does claim knowledge of God with its founder Patanjali supporting this position with a kind of ontological argument of degrees.[92] Nevertheless, it is generally agreed among the Indian schools that any knowledge of Ultimate Reality or God cannot be established on the basis of pure reason or experience alone. The knowledge of God is of a spiritual nature and involves the use of a higher faculty, called insight or intuition or any other name.[93]

Though revelation plays an important role in the conveyance of divine knowledge, it is the transcendental powers of the spirit that become significant in the acquisition of divine knowledge. The purification of the inner man thus becomes very crucial before the light of

---

86 Hans Küng, *Does God Exist*, p.540
87 *Ibid*, p.544
88 Michael C. Sudduth, "Plantinga's Revision of the Reformed Tradition: Rethinking Our Natural Knowledge of God" (http://www.homestead.com/philofreligion/files/WCBSymposiumPaper.htm)
89 M. Hiriyanna, *Indian Philosophy*, p. 180
90 *Ibid,* pp. 243, 258
91 *Ibid,* p. 243
92 *Ibid,* p. 282
93 *Ibid,* p. 179

Reality can shine on the self. The result of such illumination is both an epistemological and an ontological salvation. As in the Upanishads:

> Regarding this there is this pithy verse: 'When all the desires that dwell in his heart (mind) are gone, then he, having been mortal, becomes immortal, and attains Brahman in this very body.' Just as the lifeless slough of a snake is cast off and lies in the ant-hill, so does this body lie. Then the self becomes disembodied and immortal, (becomes) the Prana (Supreme Self), Brahman, the Light…[94]
>
> One who has not desisted from bad conduct, whose senses are not under control, whose mind is not concentrated, whose mind is not free from anxiety (about the result of concentration), cannot attain this Self through knowledge.[95]

The aspirant after such knowledge is urged to keep away from profitless indulgence in words, possibly of rational character

> The intelligent aspirant after Brahman, knowing about this alone, should attain intuitive knowledge. (He) should not think of too many words, for it is particularly fatiguing to the organ of speech.[96]

The knowledge of Ultimate Reality is beyond verbal conception, far be verbal discussion. Regarding the Turiya Self[97] it is said:

> …Since It (i.e.) is devoid of every characteristic that can make the use of words possible, It is not describable through words….
>
> ...For a relation between the real and the unreal does not lend itself to verbal representation, since the relation itself is unsubstantial.... the Self is free from all adventitious attributes…. It is free from generic and specific attributes…. Therefore It baffles all verbal description.[98]

This knowledge of God or the Self, accordingly, is considered to be unattainable through either study or reasoning.

---

[94] *Brhadaranyaka Upanisad* IV.iv.7 (trans. Swami Madhavananda; Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1997), pp. 505-506

[95] *Katha Upanisad* I.ii.24 (trans. Swami Gambhirananda; Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1996), p. 62

[96] *Brhadaranyaka Upanisad* IV.iv.21, p. 519

[97] The fourth quarter of the Self, the first three being Vaisvanara whose sphere of action is the waking state, the Taijasa whose sphere of action is the dream state, and the Prajna whose sphere of action is the deep dreamless sleep state.

[98] *Mandukya Upanisad with the Karika of Gaudapada and the Commentary of Sankaracarya* (trans. Swami Gambhirananda; Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama), pp. 31,32

> This Self cannot be known through much study, nor through the intellect, nor through much hearing. It can be known through the Self alone that the aspirant prays to; this Self of that seeker reveals Its true nature.[99]

Thus, moral action, spiritual illumination, and intuitive insight are the chief elements of divine epistemics in the Upanishads. Divine knowledge can never be attained to on the basis of reason or sense-experience alone.

Epistemology, Ontology, and Theology: Truth, Reality, and Divine Reality

Epistemology is related to knowledge while Ontology is related to reality. Epistemology seeks to understand the nature, sources, and scope of knowledge; Ontology, to understand the nature of reality. Epistemology deals with the meaning of Truth; Ontology deals with the meaning of reality. True or false is predicated of statements only. Real or unreal is predicated of existence. Therefore, logic and semantics are important issues in the study of truth. Truth is mental; reality is essential. Truth is dependent on reality; reality is independent of truth. Truth is usually contextual. There are different kinds of truths that are truthful only within their contexts. For instance, there are poetical truths expressed in statements that would appear total falsehood in any other linguistic context or genre. Truth is that which is known about reality. As such, therefore, truth, in common experience, is substantial.[100]

The prominent theories of truth are the correspondence theory, the coherence theory, and the pragmatic theory.[101] The correspondence theory states that any idea that corresponds with reality is true.[102] The theory assumes that some truth about reality is already known, which in turn becomes the standard by which any idea of or statement about that reality is to be judged. However, it doesn't clarify how this precedent, so-called, knowledge of reality is itself judged as true. The question involved is whether the common sense views people generally have about reality are themselves true. The Hindu non-dualists would certainly deny the factuality of phenomena as commonly observed. According to them all such knowledge is only a misapprehension of the real; therefore, any attempt to establish truth by means of correspondence to reality *as known* (phenomena) is headed the wrong way. Obviously, the problems of epistemics and ontology are deeply related, intertwined, and connected. Thus, the epistemological problem seems unresolved in the theory of correspondence.

---

[99] *Katha Upanishad* I.ii.23 , p. 61

[100] Some mystics would claim to have full possession of the truth of reality through union with it. However, the inadequacy of their knowledge is obvious, since none of them would claim complete knowledge of all reality as if being omniscient.

[101] Hendrik M. Vroom, *Religions and the Truth* (trans. J.W. Rebel; Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1989), pp. 40-42

[102] Warren C. Young, *A Christian Approach to Philosophy* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1954), p. 52

The coherence theory defines truth as the coherence of statements. In other words, in order for a statement to be true it must cohere with the body of statements already recognized as true. Several problems emerge when trying to follow this criterion. First of all, how can one be sure that the body of knowledge already recognized as true coheres or will cohere with the greater body of truths yet to be discovered? In other words, since there are several facts about reality that have not yet been known, there is no guarantee that the consistent picture of coherent propositions that we now profess will accord with what will be known later on. In that sense, truth no longer is absolute but relative to the immediate body of knowledge with which it coheres. What is ultimately true in the final sense cannot be known. This evinces skepticism. Secondly, the question of whether what is known is a true picture of the real still exists. Modern science has confirmed that scientific theories can no longer be considered definitive but only explanatory. For instance, the laws of Newton stand true in terrestrial physics; for cosmic physics, however, the law of relativity is considered closer to truth.[103] Thirdly, since knowledge is progressive, coherence theory must assume that there was a time when a very diminutive set of truths existed. As inescapable as such a presupposition is also the question as to what body of knowledge this first set of truths should cohere with in order to be recognized as true. How will the first statement in history justify itself as true in absence of any known data, on grounds that the coherence theory specifies? Thus, the coherence theory becomes preposterous and of little practical value.

The pragmatic theory defines truth in terms of practicality or workability.[104] Simply stated, a statement is true because it works. It is the reverse of saying that truth works because it is true. Thus, truthfulness doesn't exist apart from use. Truth is not essential: it is functional. Truth is that which is profitable. "Profitable to whom?" is a question that arises and demonstrates the inherent relativism of the pragmatic theory. Since function and morality are deeply connected, the pragmatic theory has dire consequences in the field of ethics. Moral subjectivism and relativism are easy extrapolations of pragmatism. That robbery is right becomes a true statement for a robber for whom robbery works. That lying is right seems true to a liar who considers speaking truth unprofitable. Thus, it is clear that the pragmatic theory has less practical value in the overall vista of life. In addition, all truth is confined to its value in the present. As such, all metaphysical and, especially eschatological statements are restricted to the present. In order for any statement to be considered true, it must work; but, it can only be tested as workable in the present; therefore, nothing that is divested of present practical value is true. Such restrictions on truth do certainly seem to be superfluous. Why should any truth be related only to the present? Why not suppose that any claim truth will prove itself in some other time or context? However, all such arguments increasingly point to the relativity of truth again. Truth is always related and conscripted to some context.

---

[103] Stephen W. Hawking, *A Brief History of Time* (London: Bantam Books, 1988), p. 34
[104] Warren C. Young, *A Christian Approach to Philosophy*, p. 53

It must be honestly stated that subjective significance has an important role to play in matters of belief. One believes what one considers to be personally significant. Any truth that doesn't prove to be subjectively significant becomes trivial. Therefore, the importance of the pragmatic test for truth cannot be overlooked. But, is significance merely judged with relation to pragmatic usefulness or existential meaningfulness? Of course, as existential meaningfulness as will be shown in the final chapter. Therefore, usefulness alone cannot be the test for truth, especially relating to ultimate matters. As far as scientific theories are concerned experimental workability is a good and accepted test for any theory. Certainly, the flux in and the inadequacy of any one theory for all contexts becomes veritably manifest with every discovery of newer facts. The theories themselves, therefore, cannot be considered to be absolute. In this sense, science cannot claim absoluteness with respect to any scientific theory. But should the seeming inherent relativity of empirical science be posited of also metaphysical truths to the conclusion that there can similarly be no claim to absoluteness made in metaphysics? This leads us to the question of what the true nature of knowledge is; what knowledge consists in or is made up of; whether there can be any objectivity predicated of any knowledge or whether all knowledge is only subjective; whether there can be any realism in any kind of knowledge. Thus, epistemology and ontology become deeply connected. Likewise, epistemology, ontology or metaphysics of being, and theology are also deeply connected.

Theology (Revelational) and metaphysics, however, differ from each other with regard to their starting points. But, then, Revelational theology must be differentiated from natural theology. While Revelational theology begins from Revelation (Written or Oral), natural theology begins from reason. As will be seen in the final chapter, there are differences of opinion among theologians regarding the possibility or impossibility of natural theology. For among Revelational fideists it has been held that the arguments for the existence of God were not meant to prove His existence, neither to confirm faith in Him, but rather proceeded from a presupposition and faith in the existence of God. Accordingly, it has been argued that faith is the basis of any genuine theology, while reason is the basis of metaphysics. For empiricists, however, who rely on experience for all knowledge, metaphysics is impossible as will be seen in the third chapter.

Thus, theology and metaphysics, though having to do with ultimate reality, differ from each other in the sense that the former is hermeneutical while the latter is mainly speculative. While theology attempts to find validation in a right interpretation of scripture or tradition, metaphysics tries to anchor itself on some epistemic grounds such as rational certainty, empirical verity, or pragmatic strength. To both theology and metaphysics, epistemology is very important.

Epistemology provides the instrument which theology and metaphysics use to come to some conclusion. In Christianity, beliefs regarding divine reality considered to have been reached by means other than the scripture have been referred to as propositions of natural theology.

Below is a succinct consideration of this question with respect to the nature of the knowledge of divine reality, which will, henceforth, interchangeably be also referred to as divine knowledge.

The Nature of Divine Knowledge

The answer to the question of the nature of divine knowledge depends on the philosophical or theological framework from which the question is approached. The various perspectives need to be evaluated before settling the answer. Since the question falls in the category of ultimate issues, it cannot be settled arbitrarily or through even induction alone. In other words, any reference to traditional authority or scientific authority or any singular authority as evidence for the answer is philosophically invalid. However, to try to evaluate the answers with reference to the correspondence, coherence, or pragmatic theory is to plunge into circular reasoning - the question of the nature of divine knowledge rose to sort out whether the above tests for truth could be applied to divine knowledge. So, how will the answer be settled? Initially, the answer will have to be settled by comparing the different perspectives of divine knowledge. The question that needs to be investigated is: What is the nature of divine knowledge or knowledge of God? Ultimately however, the answer has to be settled by evaluating the philosophical components of the framework offering the answer. Any proposition of the nature of God by a theory emerges out of its epistemics of divine reality – the epistemic path and method by which it claims to have reached the knowledge it claims. The validity or invalidity of this path needs to be investigated by philosophy in order to certify the conclusion reached by the path. There are several philosophical implications of any conclusion about God; these implications need to be verified for their logical consistency, coherence, correspondence to facts, and pragmatic usability. However, for immediate purposes, the various perspectives will be compared to find the commonality between them with respect to divine knowledge.

Following are some answers offered to the question of the nature of divine knowledge:

1. The Atheistic Perspective
2. The Pantheistic Perspective
3. The Non-dualist Perspective
4. The Nihilist Perspective
5. The Monotheistic Perspective
6. The Trinitarian Perspective

The Atheistic Perspective. The general attitude of atheism has followed the line of Darwinian evolutionism and has drawn much from the Freudian psycho-analytic theory. In his article *Gods*, for instance, John Wisdom presents the knowledge of God as "persistent projections of infantile

phantasies."[105] The feelings associated with belief in God or gods are reminiscent of the childhood feelings towards parents and elders.[106] In his debate with F. C. Copleston, Bertrand Russell positions the religious experience of God on the same pedestal with feelings originating out of being impressed by fictional characters.[107] Thus, the atheistic perspective regards divine knowledge as fictitious, subjective, and lacking real objectivity.

The Pantheistic Perspective. Pantheism attempts at a fusion of spirit and matter. God is immanent to the universe and thus can be known in the universe. The knowledge of God, therefore, is simply the awareness or consciousness of the world as divine; of its various entities as expressions of this divine. Thus, faith and feeling both play an important role in knowing God in pantheism.

The Non-dualist or *Advaitin* Perspective. The term 'non-dualism' itself communicates its view that the subjective has no second objective to know but itself. Duality is illusive. The Real is the Self alone. All other conceptions are superimpositions. Divine knowledge, therefore, in non-dualism is equivalent to Self-realization, in the sense of not realizing one's acumen or potentiality but of realizing that the Self alone exists as the only possible being. It is only through ignorance (*Ajnana*) of this truth that egoism is nourished.[108] Self-realization means the abandonment of the individual self through realization of the Cosmic Self. Nothing other than this Cosmic Self or *Brahman* truly exists. There is no objective reality other than the unqualified Self. As Vroom notes, "The true 'knowledge' which one pursues is thus not knowledge in the common sense of the word, for God cannot be objectified."[109] This knowledge of God is possible only in the mystic experience of *Samadhi* (super-consciousness). It is based on the knowledge of *Shruti* (the Vedas). Thus, divine knowledge in non-dualism is esoteric and mystical involving the consciousness of the Self as all, in all, and through all.

The Nihilist Perspective. By this is meant the perspective of the nihilist tradition in Buddhism, i.e., the *sunya-vada* or the doctrine of the void propounded by Nagarjuna (100-200 AD). According to Nagarjuna, the perpetual flux of entities manifests the non-substantiveness of all things.[110] It evinces the emptiness or *sunyata* of everything. No object possesses 'self-nature' or essence. Everything is relative. All perceptions are illusive and belong to the realm of conventional truth to which the laws of logic apply. The higher realm is that of unutterable or

---

[105] John Wisdom, "Gods", *Philosophy of Religion* 2nd edn. (ed. John Hick; Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1970), p.443
[106] *Ibid*, p. 442
[107] Bertrand Russell and F. C. Copleston, "The Existence of God", *Philosophy of Religion,* 2nd edn. (ed. John Hick; Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1970), pp. 291-294
[108] Hendrik M. Vroom, *Religions and the Truth,* p. 122
[109] *Ibid*, p. 124
[110] O. N. Krishnan, *In Search of Reality* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 2004), p. 274

inexpressible truth where the laws of logic break down and speech is impossible.[111] The emptiness of all things makes the concept of a personal God useless. The ultimate reality is void. Thus, paradoxes and puzzles become the common means of breaking into the realm of the inexpressible ultimate in some traditions of Buddhism like *Zen*.

The Monotheistic Perspective. The monotheistic perspective of Islam conceives of divine knowledge as an act of faith. Knowing is not merely an intellectual assent but a willing commitment. It is a response to the revelation of the Quran expounded by tradition. Ultimately, therefore, salvation in Islam is by faith and not by works.[112] The knowledge of God finds its source in revelation and is therefore of a mysterious origin.[113] According to Al-Ghazali, knowledge of God results from the light that God pours in one's heart. This light of God is a gift of grace and not a matter of argumentation.[114] This gift of knowing comes in various measures to different individuals in the hierarchy of luminous (or enlightened) beings. Thus, the ability to know spiritual matters differs from person to person according to the grace mete out to each. Prophets and saints enjoy a special faculty by which they have the capacity to know spiritual and divine things and things of future.[115] Thus, divine knowledge in the monotheistic tradition of Islam is esoteric and an act of divine grace in the heart of man. In that sense it is also experiential.

The Trinitarian Perspective. Christianity conceives the knowledge of God to be spiritual in nature and, therefore, only possible through the gracious revelation of God by the Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the Holy Trinity, within the human spirit.[116] In recent times, especially in the Charismatic and Pentecostal circles, the term 'pneumatic epistemology' has been used for the epistemic approach that believes that knowledge of God and Divine truths is only possible through the illuminating power of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of God who knows the mind of God communicates to the believer's spirit the things of God. Thus, a carnally disposed person cannot understand the things of God. Spiritual things are spiritually discerned and understood. The revelation of the Spirit of God is based on the revealed Word of God.[117] There are differences of opinion in Christian theology whether divine knowledge is possible through specific revelation alone or whether it can be obtained by means of natural reason also. While the Catholic theologians allowed for the possibility of natural theology, Evangelicals such as Karl Barth rejected any natural theology as valid. Whatever, the general consensus has been that the true

[111] Hendrik M. Vroom, *Religions and the Truth,* p. 175
[112] John Alden Williams (ed.), *Islam* (New York: George Braziller, 1962), p. 174
[113] Hendrik M. Vroom, *Religions and the Truth,* p. 276
[114] *Ibid,* p. 281
[115] *Ibid,* p. 282
[116] I Corinthians 2: 10-14
[117] John 16: 13, 14

knowledge of God is spiritually communicated to man in the spirit.[118] This does not disallow intellectual or experiential knowledge of God. Even the devils believe in God and tremble.[119] However, true relational and salvific knowledge is spiritual. This kind of knowledge saves the soul.[120] Thus, ultimately, knowledge of God is spiritual in nature.

As seen from above, most of the views lay claim to the internality of divine knowledge. However, since not all the conclusions arising out of this claim to internal knowledge are similar, it stands that all of them cannot be true at the same time. This imposition of the law of non-contradiction on religious claims is not arbitrary. It is necessary for any conversation to be meaningful.

It can be, therefore, concluded that the indispensability of the laws of logic cannot be overlooked in considering the answer to the question of the religious knowledge of God. Since, knowledge of God involves an entity and realm different from the ordinary phenomenal world, the tests of correspondence and coherence cannot be applied wholly to it. Even pragmatic workability cannot be considered as the best criterion for evaluating religious truth. How can one know that the immediate workability of something relates to the eternal workability of that same thing? The only indispensable criterion available is the law of logical consistency; without which any talk of divine knowledge itself is nonsensical. Of course, the nihilists of Buddhism do not favor logical analysis in the field of religious knowledge. However, even they hold on to the exclusiveness of their claim to truth by saying that all is empty. Thus, the laws of logic are inescapable. The tests of correspondence, coherence, and pragmatism can be applied to the non-spiritual, physical implications and explanations of the systems.

Approaches to knowledge, as has been seen, are very significant. The skeptic considers knowledge as unattainable while the subjectivist considers it to be relative. The phenomenalist looks at all knowledge as constructs of the mind whereas the analytical philosopher considers all knowledge to be only related to the physical world. The ways in which the philosophers and theologians come to hold such views deserve a deeper attention.

One question is what comes first, metaphysics or epistemology? Is metaphysics the result of epistemology or vice versa? The answer is, both. Sometimes metaphysics seems to be dependent on epistemology, like in continental rationalism and British empiricism. However, most often, in religion it is seen that a particular epistemology is the result of a metaphysical stance.[121] Thus,

---

[118] "…they knew God" (Romans 1: 21) may be interpreted as common awareness of God through general revelation in nature and in the human spirit. *Cf.* "…that which may be known of God is manifest ***in*** them" (Romans 1: 19 Researcher's emphasis in bold italics).

[119] James 2: 19

[120] John 17: 3 & 2 Thessalonians 1: 8

[121] Hridaynarayan Mishra, *Paschatya Darshan Ki Samasyaye (Gyan Mimamsa Evam Tatva Mimamsa)* (Allahabad: Shekhar Prakashan, 2003), p. 40

advaita philosophy considers all knowledge of external reality as illusory. However, it is obvious that any conclusion regarding epistemology or metaphysics must necessarily follow some epistemic method. Both metaphysics and epistemology are highly dependent on the epistemic approach they take; in other words, the source of knowledge that is accepted as one's epistemic authority has a great role in shaping the epistemic theory or metaphysical theory developed thereby. Therefore, a study of the epistemics of divine reality with reference to each of the chief sources accepted is in order. The next chapter will deal with the rational epistemics of divine reality, followed by a study of the empirical epistemics of divine reality and finally rational fideism.

The criterion that has been chosen for the classification of the theories is as follows:

1. Any theory that regards sense-experience as not a reliable source of knowledge but accepts the possibility of some a priori knowledge follows the path of rational epistemics. Under this division are studied the following theories: Eleatic Monism and Advaitic Non-dualism.
2. Any theory that regards sense-experience as the only source of knowledge available, or at least regards it as the most prominent source of knowledge, follows the path of empirical epistemics. Under this division are studied the following theories: Primal Theology, Polytheism, Pantheism, Process philosophy, Skepticism, Pragmatism, and Logical Positivism.
3. Any theory that regards the knowledge of divine reality to be impossible except through a revelation by the deity itself but also requires that that revelation be rationally intelligible, consistent, and a 'satisfactory'[122] description of reality, follows the path of rational fideism. Under this division will be studied the theories of Neo-orthodoxy, Foundationalism, Cognitive Voluntarism, Existentialism, Swinburne's Rational Fideism, and Biblical Rational Fideism.

[122] That is, undeniable or self-evident.

Chapter 2

RATIONAL EPISTEMICS OF DIVINE REALITY

This chapter aims to prove that the ultimate consequence of any rational epistemics of divine reality is monism or non-dualism. This is so because the rationality of reality implies unity, necessity, immutability, transcendence, and infinity as will be proved in this chapter, and therefore in order to make a rational sense out of reality, reason rejects all experience as an illusion. This will be proved through a study of Greek monism and *Advaintin* non-dualism. At the end, Kant's Phenomenalism will be studied to see how he attempts to solve the problem of the rationality of reality, though it will be shown that his epistemics only tends towards subjectivity, skepticism, and agnosticism. The study of each system will be followed by a critique, by the researcher, of the same at the end of each section.

'Rational epistemics of divine reality' may be defined as the study of the epistemic procedures of metaphysical theories on divine reality that regard reason as their chief source of knowledge. 'Reason' may be defined as the capacity for inference and rational thought. In common parlance, reason refers to that faculty of the human knowing process that ensures certainty, consistency, and purity in the field of knowledge. It can be distinguished from experience as the source of knowledge that does not require exhaustive sense-perceptions of all reality to verify it, but is verified as self-evident by reason itself. Since rational epistemics has reason as its basis it is referred to as being rational. In this chapter, the results of the rational attempts at the knowledge of God will be studied in order to see whether reason is a reliable source or guide of divine knowledge.

The Quest for Rational Certainty in Epistemology

Rationalism may be defined as the epistemic theory that holds that only knowledge derived or based on reason are certain. It believes in the existence of some *a priori* knowledge, i.e., knowledge that does not originate in sense experience, though it may find validation through it. These *a priori* truths are regarded to be real. Experience is considered to be unreliable as the senses are unreliable. The bent spoon in a glass of water, a mirage, and a motion picture based on the persistence of vision are all indicative that sense experience is not a reliable guide to truth. However, the laws of logic (like the law of non-contradiction that states that $A=B \neq A\neq B$) are doubtlessly held as axiomatic. In the same way, statements like 'every effect must have a cause' and 'every object occupies space' are considered to be axiomatic truths that are crucial to any rational analysis. It is only through reasoning based on some fundamental *a priori* truths that all truths are thought to be established.

The quest of reason for certainty in knowledge can be described as follows. Truth is expressed in statements. Statements are sentences that possess meaning. Statements of truth are those propositions that possess absolute meaning. *A priori* or rational truths have at least five characteristics that distinguish them as rational truths; they are: unity, necessity, immutability, transcendence, and strict universality.

Unity refers to the identity, exclusivity, and non-ambiguity of truth. Truth is one. A rational truth is singular and exclusive. Thus, 2+2=4 means that 2+2=4 and not 2+2=5. In the same manner, 'All bodies are extended' expresses the predicate as contained in the subject; thus, identical and one.

To say that truth is a unity also means that it is subject to the law of non-contradiction. The law of non-contradiction states that it cannot be true both that a proposition is true and also that it is false; not both *p* and not-*p* (e.g., 'A rose cannot be not a rose').[123] This excludes all possibility of relativizing truth. Though truth is subjective (as it is subjective knowledge of objective reality) it is not arbitrarily decided. It is subjectively discovered not determined. Thus, if one holds something to be true (say, it is raining) which someone else doesn't hold to be true (say, it is not raining), then a contradiction is obvious and both of them cannot be true at the same time. Either one is true or the other is true; not both true at the same time. The law of non-contradiction itself is a self-validating truth. It cannot be falsified. Thus truth must be singular and exclusive in nature.

Another feature of rational truths is necessity. This differentiates them from empirical truths which are contingent. Rational truths cannot be thought as non-existent. For instance, 'All bodies occupy space' is discovered through experience, of course, but there can never be imagined a body that does not occupy space. Thus, 'body' and 'space' are rationally connected and the concept of space becomes necessary for the concept of body. In the same manner, it does of necessity follow that 2+2 = 4. Likewise, the laws of reason are necessary rational truths. They are necessary for any reasoning to occur. Without them no reasoning is possible.

Rational truths cannot be considered to be fluctuating as the material world is. Truth must be immutable in nature. For if truth is inconsistent and changeable, no statement of truth can be regarded to be absolute. Therefore, truth is unchangeable.

For rational truths to be immutable they must be beyond the fluctuating effects of time and matter. This is what is meant by the transcendence of truth. Rationalists do agree that rational truths are above and over empirical truths. Plato's world of ideas is one example of such transcendent conception of rational truths.

By strict universality is meant that rational truths are not conditioned by any location. Thus, 2+2 = 4 is true on earth and also on Pluto.

[123] Hunnex, *Charts*, p. 4

Thus, rational truth is basically understood as possessing the qualities of unity, necessity, eternity, universality,[124] immutability, and transcendence. It will be seen in this chapter that when knowledge about ultimate reality is sought through rational epistemics, all the above or most of the features of truth mentioned above are anticipated as features of ultimate reality itself in some way or the other. This, the researcher, contends to be what the rational epistemics of divine reality is all about. The absolute nature of truth is projected on to reality itself. Thus, whatever one calls God to be, this world or a wholly other being, God is posited as One (unity), Self-existent (necessity), Immutable, Spirit (transcendence), and Infinite (universality). This chapter aims to uncover this nature of rational epistemics in the theories of the leading rationalists.

Rationalism can be found in the thoughts of several philosophers in both the Western and Eastern tradition. However, its full fledged development as a modern methodology was realized in the thought of the seventeenth century French philosopher and mathematician Rene Descartes (1596-1650),[125] who proposed that certainty in philosophy can be achieved in the same way as in mathematics through the skeptical rational method. Exactitude and indubitability were goals that Descartes desired to achieve in the field of knowledge. Descartes' argument for the existence of God is a classic example of the modernist (rationalist) attempt to arrive at a rational certainty in theology.

Among the various rationalists are notably Plato (ca. 428-348 B.C.), Saint Augustine (354-430), Benedict Spinoza (1632-1677), Rene Descartes (1596-1650), Gottfried Wilhelm Leibnitz (1646-1716), and George Hegel (1770-1831).[126]

The Conflict of Reason and Reality in Rational Epistemics

At face value, the striking dissimilarities between *a priori* knowledge and *a posteriori* knowledge are evident. Unity, necessity, transcendence, immutability, and strict universality are characteristic of all truths given *a priori*. Conversely, plurality (diversity), contingency, immanence, change, and temporality are characteristic of all objects perceive *a posteriori*. Therefore, the quest of the rationalists has been to find a unified, necessary, transcendent, immutable, and universal ground of all diverse, contingent, immanent, changing, and temporal reality. The word 'universe' as such describes the philosophical search for unity in diversity; the whole reality as conceived of as somehow essentially one.

---

[124] Alister E. McGrath, *The Making of Modern German Christology 1750-1990*, 2nd edn. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1993), p. 31
[125] "Rationalism," *Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia* (Microsoft Corporation, 2001)
[126] Velasquez, *Philosophy*, p. 289

The Grecian Search for Unity in Diversity

The earliest schools of philosophy in the West can be traced to the sixth century B.C. in Greece. Prominent among them were, first of all, the Ionian School, the Pythogorean School, the Heraclitean School, and the Eleatic School. All the above schools of philosophy had one quest in common: the search for one singular essence that explained all reality. In other words, they were searching for unity in diversity.

A study of the religion of Greece will not be out of place here since it is evident that a shift in the view of divine reality also means a shift in the epistemic procedure, which if not sudden might have been gradual. As Wilfred Cantwell Smith notes 'each religion is the point at which its adherent is in touch, through the intermediary of an accumulating tradition, with the infinitude of the divine.'[127] Therefore, a study of the route to the development of the first philosophers can be a great help in ascertaining why some Greeks turned away from religion to reason in search for ultimate reality.

Will Durant points out five unifying elements in the civilization of the Greece that kept all its scattered cities somehow connected. They are: a common language, with local dialects; a common intellectual life, in which only major figures in literature, philosophy, and science are known far beyond their political frontiers; a common passion for athletics, finding outlet in municipal and interstate games; love of beauty locally expressed in forms of art common to all the Greek communities; and a partly common religious ritual and belief.[128] Durant goes on to say that religion divided the cities as much as it united them. In the same manner that each family had its own deity, each city also had its own deity. Athens worshipped Athena, Eleusis Demeter, Samos Hera, Ephesus Artemis, Poseidonia Poseidon. The city deity was believed to be the preserver, defender, and strength of the city. Just as the father was the priest in the family, the chief magistrate or archon was the high priest of the state religion in the Greek city.[129] Polytheism was accompanied by a luxuriant mythology that Durant sees to be more anthropomorphic than any other religion of the world.[130] Animal and human sacrifices to appease the deity were common. Every craft, profession, and art had its divinity. Thus, polytheistic religion pervaded almost every facet of Greek life. Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* expresses the view that the gods control all human events and the one on the side of the stronger and wittier god ultimately wins. In such polytheism, ethics mattered less. The gods themselves are pictured as slaves of lust and passion. There is no moral order since there is no single point of reference in the multiplicity of divinities. Each divinity is a point of reference in itself. Whoever serves that

[127] Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *Islam in Modern History* (New York: Mentor Books, 1957), p. 15
[128] Will Durant, *The Story of Civilization: Part II, The Life of Greece* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1939), p. 175
[129] *Ibid*, p. 176
[130] *Ibid*, p. 176

particular deity is under its patronage at the possibility of becoming an enemy of another deity. Egotism, revenge, heroism, and valor are extolled.

The shift from multiple points of reference to a consistent moral law that is above even the gods and determines the state of the world seems to have first occurred in Hesiod. Writing sometime in the eighth century B.C., Hesiod dismissed the notion of fatality and of the gods as being morally inconsistent.[131] Though the gods control nature, the moral order which is a product of Zeus' commands controls the structure of the universe and regulates its process of changes. Thus, Hesiod's writings can be called the transitional bridge between religious beliefs and philosophical thinking. According to Stumpf, it was this transitional venture of Hesiod that the Milesians undertook, indicating a substantial departure from the poetry of Homer and Hesiod and a movement toward what can be called the temperament of science.[132]

According to Will Durant, the predecessor to philosophy was a critical and skeptical outlook produced by motley of religions and cultures that intersected each other in the Grecian metropolises. Athens was becoming a busy mart and port that attracted varieties of races and cults; thus, providing a context for comparison, analysis and thought. As Durant himself states:

> Traditions and dogmas rub one another down to a minimum in such centers of varied intercourse; where there are a thousand faiths we are apt to become sceptical of them all. Probably the traders were the first sceptics; they had seen too much to believe too much; and the general disposition of merchants to classify all men as either fools or knaves inclined them to question every creed.[133]

Durant's speculative description of the Grecian environment in which philosophy took birth may not be wrong. It is natural to reason that two opposing views cannot be both true at the same time. This points one to the inescapability of reason in matters of truth. The necessity of moral consistency might even be felt by the traders for whom fidelity matters much. On the other hand, people are seen as seeking to get nature back into their control from the hands of the gods by attempting to locate explanations for natural events in something other than the gods. In the East, this impersonal other thing that explained all other things was thought to be either a cosmic energy or a cosmic order by tapping or appealing to which even the gods could be overpowered. However, in the West the unifying singular was thought to be some kind of a primordial substance. As Durant writes, 'Men grew bold enough to attempt natural explanations of processes and events before attributed to supernatural agencies and powers; magic and ritual slowly gave way to science and control; and philosophy began.'[134]

---

[131] Samuel Enoch Stumpf, *Socrates to Sartre,* 4th edn. (New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1988), p. 4
[132] *Ibid*, p. 3
[133] Will Durant, *The Story of Philosophy*, p. 2
[134] *Ibid*, p. 3

The Ionian School. Philosophy is considered to have been born in the seaport town of Miletus, located across the Aegean Sea from Athens, on the western shores of Ionia in Asia Minor in around 585 B.C. This is why the first philosophers are also referred to as Milesians or Ionians.[135] Ionia was a district of ancient Greece on the west coast of Asia Minor (now Turkey). It comprised famous and important cities like Ephesus, Clazomenae, Erythrae, Colophon, Smyrna, and Miletus.[136] It is certainly an amazement that a religiously steeped location such as Ionia, which had earlier on produced Homer the author of *Iliad* and *Odyssey,* should suddenly become very secular in its search for wisdom; thus, producing the first of philosophers in Western history. However, as seen earlier, the quest for control over nature might have been one reason behind the search for some natural explanation of the universe. As such the Ionians were searching for a singular thing that was the essence of all reality. If this essential thing were rightly understood, then all the other things would also be understood. Thus, man would be in possession of a knowledge that would serve as an instrument to both explain and control natural processes.

The first of these Ionian philosophers is considered to be Thales (624-546 B.C.). Thales asked the question: What is everything made of, or what stuff are things composed of? His contribution to thought was the novel notion that though all things differ form each other in several ways, there is a basic similarity between them all and that *the many* are related to each other by *the One.* For Thales, this one thing that united all diversity and that was foundational to all physical reality was water.[137] According to him, it is from water that everything proceeds and into which everything is again resolved. Not much is known about Thales except from allusions to him especially in Aristotle's *Metaphysics.*

In his analysis of early metaphysics, Aristotle observes that most of the first philosophers thought the principles that were of the nature of matter were the only principles of all things.[138] In other words, the early metaphysicians were more concerned with the material cause of the universe than with any of the other causes.[139]

> …. That of which all things that are consist, the first from which they come to be, the last into which they are resolved (the substance remaining, but changing in its modifications), this they say is the element and this the principle of things, and therefore they think nothing is either generated or destroyed, since this sort of entity is always conserved, as we say Socrates neither comes to be absolutely when he comes to be beautiful or musical, nor ceases to be when he loses these characteristics, because

---

[135] Samuel Enoch Stumpf, *Socrates to Sartre,* p. 4
[136] "Ionia" *Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia* (Microsoft Corporation, 2001)
[137] Samuel Enoch Stumpf, *Socrates to Sartre,* p. 6
[138] Justin D. Kaplan (ed.), *The Pocket Aristotle* (trans. W. D. Ross (ed.); New York: Pocket Books, 1958), p. 114
[139] The four causes are: the material cause (the matter of which a thing is made), the efficient cause (the maker), the formal cause (the form in which the thing is made), and the final cause (the end of the thing for which it is made).

> the substratum, Socrates himself, remains. Just so they say nothing else comes to be or ceases to be; for there must be some entity – either one or more than one – from which all other things come to be, it being conserved.[140]

Aristotle makes it clear that most of the first philosophers thought that the material cause was the one, indestructible, eternal substratum to all things. For Thales, this one, uncreated, indestructible, eternal substance or essence of all things was water. Aristotle opined that Thales might have got this notion from seeing that the nutriment of all things is moist, and that heat itself is generated from the moist and kept alive by it; that the seeds of all things have a moist nature, and that water is the origin of the nature of moist things.[141]

Anaximenes and Diogenes saw air as prior to water and as the most primary of the simple bodies. Hippasus of Metapontium and Heraclitus of Ephesus said that fire was the primary principle. However, Empedocles attempted to combine the above three with an addition of a fourth, earth, thus attributing finality to the four elements: water, air, fire, and earth. Empedocles argued that these always remain and do not come to be, except that they come to be more or fewer, being aggregated into one and segregated out of one.[142] Aristotle, however, questioned this restricting of ultimate reality to material causes only and disregarding the effective cause and final cause of things. He argued that if material causes, like air or water, are the final essentialities, then the world cannot come to be good or beautiful, and is thus devoid of any goal or purpose for existence. In his words:

> …it is not likely either that fire or earth or any such element should be the reason why things manifest goodness and beauty both in their being and in their coming to be, or that those thinkers should have supposed it was; nor again could it be right to entrust so great a matter to spontaneity and chance. When one man said, then, that reason was present – as in animals, so throughout nature – as the cause of order and of all arrangement, he seemed like a sober man in contrast with the random talk of his predecessors.[143]

The Ionian philosophers did not seem to consider the problem of the how or why of the universe. In terms of Aristotelian thinking, such metaphysics falls short of authoritative science because "the science which knows to what end each thing must be done is the most authoritative of the sciences…and this end is the good of that thing, and in general the supreme good in the whole of nature."[144] Thus, according to Aristotle, it is not just the discovery of the material cause but also the discovery of the efficient and final causes that is important in this search for ultimate reality.

---

[140] *Ibid*, p. 114
[141] *Ibid*, p. 114
[142] *Ibid*, p. 115
[143] *Ibid*, p. 116
[144] *Ibid*, p. 112

This need to unravel the other causes manifests itself though naively in theories that regard elements like fire "having a nature which fits it to move things" as the first principle.

The basic drive was, however, to find out that one element that united and was fundamental to all of nature. This doesn't mean that there weren't some who seemingly posited a pluralistic foundation of the universe as can be seen in the later Thracian materialistic schools of Leucippus and Democritus. But even in the atomic theory of Democritus, the atoms are all made of the same matter though they differ in shape, size, weight, sequence, and position. They are minute, invisible, indivisible, indestructible, and eternal.[145] The quest for the One cannot be evaded in latter thinking. The Ionians, thus, can be considered to initiate the quest for the One in Metaphysics.

In summary, the Ionian philosophers beginning with Thales searched for the one, fundamental, element or principle that united all of nature. The philosophers disagreed among themselves as to whether this first principle was water or air or fire until Empedocles decided to regard all three together with a fourth, earth, as the four elements out of which all things come. The next question, inevitably, was "what is that element that was the quintessence of the four elements?" The search for the One, thus, was inescapable. The One out of which the many proceeded was considered to be eternal. However, the early Ionians left the question of efficient causality and purpose out of their theories. Though some would not consider this to be a major problem at all, Aristotle thought this to be a real problem. How can chance produce the effects of beauty and goodness in nature? There has to be an efficient and a final cause of the universe. The universe cannot be a free lunch. This led Anaxagoras[146] to conclude that the cosmos is the result of an eternal governing principle called *nous* (intelligence, reason) that brings order out of the chaotic sea of atoms in the universe. This, however, leads to two different eternal causes: the material cause being the atoms and the efficient cause being reason. Thus, the quest for the unity in diversity of matter led to the quest for the efficient cause of all things in general.

The Ionian speculation of an eternal first material principle alludes to the following arguments:

1. Something cannot come out of nothing. Therefore, something must have eternally existed.
2. Something cannot produce its unlike; therefore, all things are made up of that something.
3. Thales (according to Aristotle's guess): All things grow in moist; therefore, water is the source of all things.
4. Anaximenes and Diogenes: Air is prior to water; therefore, air is the most primary of the simple bodies.

---

145 "Democritus," *Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia* (Microsoft Corporation, 2001)
146 "Greek Philosophy," *Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia* (Microsoft Corporation, 2001)

5. Anaxagoras: Matter is composed of infinite minute atoms which are chaotic in nature. Order out of chaos can only be created by mind. Therefore, *nous* (an eternal intelligence) is the author of unity and order in the universe.[147] Since something cannot come out of nothing the material cause "atoms" are eternal. Since chaos is natural, reason must be the eternal author of order in the universe.

Consequently, the universe itself is materialistically eternal in Ionian philosophy. However, none of the Ionian philosophers were able to sufficiently explain how the primordial elements that they proposed were the basic foundation of the universe. To the Ionians, the material cause of the universe was a more important question; and the eternality of the material cause was a logical deduction of the fact that something cannot proceed out of nothing.

The Pythagorean School. While Thales was the founder of the Ionian school based in Miletus, Pythagoras (c. 582-c. 500 B.C.) was the founder of the Italian school of philosophy based in Samos.[148] He was original in thinking that mathematics is the best purifier of the soul.[149] The Pythagoreans believed in immortality and transmigration of souls among many other mysteries that they adhered to. Being very mystically oriented, their goal in philosophy was more religious than secular in nature. They are better known for their mathematical obsession with numbers than for their other religious inclinations though they even attributed mystical value to numbers. To them number was the ultimate principle of all proportion, order, and harmony in the universe.[150] In distinction from the Ionian materialists, Pythagoras stressed the importance of form rather than matter in explaining material structure and laid great emphasis on the importance of soul of which the body was only a tomb.[151] The Pythagoreans not only advanced in the study of mathematics, according to Aristotle, but also having brought up in it thought that its principles were the principles of all things, thus arguing for the mathematical foundation of the universe.[152]

To the Pythagoreans, numbers, which were by nature the first of the mathematical principles, were at the basis of all things and all things were composed of numbers: "such and such a modification of numbers being justice, another being soul and reason, another being opportunity – and similarly almost all other things being numerically expressible."[153] Observing the mathematical structure of musical notes and scales, they concluded that the whole universe was a musical scale and a number. The Pythagorean search for unity in diversity led them to mathematics and numbers as the key to unravelling the mysteries of the universe. This resulted in a pluralistic interpretation of the fundamental structure of the universe. However, as Aristotle

[147] "Anaxagoras," *Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia* (Microsoft Corporation, 2001)
[148] Augustine, *The City of God* (tr. Marcus Dodsi; New York: The Modern Library, 1950), p. 244
[149] Samuel Enoch Stumpf, *Socrates to Sartre*, p. 9
[150] "Pythagoras," *Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia* (Microsoft Corporation, 2001)
[151] "Greek Philosophy," *Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia* (Microsoft Corporation, 2001)
[152] Justin D. Kaplan (ed.), *The Pocket Aristotle*, p.119
[153] *Ibid*, p. 119

notes, even the Pythagoreans were not able to take the question of efficient causality into consideration. That is to say, the Pythagoreans were not successful in explaining the phenomena of motion in the universe. Though numbers as foundational to the universe might be a plausible theory, it does not in any carry any clue as to what is the source of motion among the elements of nature. This problem is well expounded and dealt with by the Eleatic philosopher, Zeno, a disciple of Parmenides as will be seen later.

In analysis, the Pythagorean theory seems to have counted on numbers as the basic reality since the universe being measurably composed of entities in calculable space and time since to be plausibly analysable numerically. However, the Pythagoreans were not able to establish how numbers combined to produce things. It is easier to reckon that things are perfectly designed in a mathematical accuracy by some intelligence, rather than being randomly generated by chance combinations of numbers.

The Heraclitean School. Heraclitus (c. 500 B.C.) was different from his predecessors in that he attempted to explain phenomenon as not merely 'being' but also as 'becoming,' which he regarded to be a basic reality underlying all things. There is nothing permanent but change, according to him. He illustrated it by saying that a person could not step into the same river twice.[154] While flux was the basic reality underlying all things, all things themselves were considered to be ultimately composed of fire. Everything is fire, he contended. Fire alone possesses the power of producing change by condensation and rarefaction. Therefore, fire is the primordial source of matter.He also did not leave out efficient causality out of his system. Heraclitus taught that change or becoming or flux was not wild but governed and ordered by the *logos*, meaning 'law,' 'word,' or 'reason.' He identified the laws of nature with the speech of the divine mind. It has been rightly pointed out that his idea of fire as the fundamental substance anticipated the modern theory of energy, while his doctrine of the logos developed into the pantheistic theology of Stoicism.[155] The New Physics has shown that the universe is ultimately made up of energy and that mass is only one particular form of energy.[156] However, energy cannot be thought without motion, which again leads to the question of efficient causality or the Prime Mover of the universe. Heraclitus was clever enough not to lose sight of this question by attributing order and control to the *logos*.

Following are the characteristics of *logos* that Heraclitus expounded:

1. The logos was fire-like.
2. The logos was a divine force.
3. The logos produces the order and pattern discernible in the flux of nature.

[154] "Heraclitus," *Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia* (Microsoft Corporation, 2001)
[155] "Western Philosophy," *Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia* (Microsoft Corporation, 2001)
[156] Gary Zukav, *The Dancing Wu Li Masters*, p. 203

4. This divine force is similar to human reason.[157]

Thus, Heraclitus sees fire, flux, and the divine force, *logos,* to be behind all phenomena. But, then, Heraclitus has come up with several explanations to reality as has been seen:

1. The material cause is fire.
2. The basic reality is flux.
3. The governing intelligence is *logos.*

However, attributing fire-likeness to *logos,* which was inevitable if everything is fire, implies that *logos* is also in flux. But if *logos,* which is akin to human reason, is in flux then there can be no absolute principles of governance since all would be in flux. How then could *logos* bring order in the chaotic flux of the universe? The answer is not clear. There is no clue to say that Heraclitus regarded *logos* to be of a different order of existence. If it was so, he would then have to think in terms of two different possible realities: the divine unchangeable reality and the secular changeable reality. However, this doesn't appear in Heraclitus. To him flux is basic to all being. Aristotle, later, came to see 'being' and 'becoming' in terms of potentiality and actuality and saw the divine as beyond the sphere of becoming having in it the full realization of the actuality of being. The next school to be dealt with, namely the Eleatic School questions both the Pythagorean view of the universe as numerical and the Heraclitean view of it as being in perpetual flux.

The Eleatic School. The Eleatic school of philosophy, deriving its name from the Greek city of Elea, in southern Italy, the home of Parmenides (c. 500 B.C.) and Zeno, the leading exponents of the school, flourished in the sixth and fifth centuries B.C. Many of the Eleatic doctrines are based upon the teachings of Xenophanes, though the systematization of them into metaphysics was done by Parmenides.[158] Parmenides taught that the world as it appears to us is an illusion. In truth, there is neither movement of objects nor the objects themselves in their diversity. Reality is not known to the senses but is to be found only in reason. Reality or True Being neither comes into nor goes out of existence. It is eternal, indivisible, and unchanging. The theories of both Pythagoras and Heraclitus are, thus, annulled; and in Parmenides, the Grecian quest for unity in diversity reaches its rational apex.

Regarding the nature of this singular reality, the following arguments are presented by Parmenides:

[157] "Logos," *Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia* (Microsoft Corporation, 2001)
[158] "Eleatic School," *Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia* (Microsoft Corporation, 2001)

Argument from Change

1. To think of change requires thinking of something in terms of what it is not.
2. But reality, or being, is what it is and not something else.
3. Therefore, it is impossible to think of change in any clear way since the only thing one can think about is being, or what actually is.[159]

To think that being changes, one has to also think of it in terms of something it is not (something changes when it becomes something different from what it is in the present); and something other than being is non-being. However, it is impossible to think of non-being (to think of non-being means to think of nothing). Therefore, it is impossible to think of change in any clear way. Thus, this argument proves the non-rationality of empirical mutability. However, it is a weak argument since it only proves that no essential change can take place in the nature of being but doesn't show why that being cannot change in relation to something else. For instance, to say that water becomes ice doesn't mean that water and ice differ in the essentiality of being, but as different in relation to form: liquid or solid.

Argument from Coming-into-being

1. For something to arise out of non-being and come into being, non-being must be something, which it is not; therefore to say that something comes into being out of non-being is absurd.
2. To say that something arises out of being means that it already is. Therefore, there cannot be a coming-into-being out of being.[160]
3. Therefore, reality or being can neither be considered to have come out of non-being nor out of being. If it is not, it cannot be; if it is then, it cannot become.

This argument is based on the assumption that something cannot come out of nothing. Therefore, being can only come out of non-being if non-being were something, but non-being is nothing; and since something cannot come out of nothing, it is absurd to suppose that being came out of non-being. However, to say that being came into being out of being is to suppose that being is already in existence before it comes into being, which is contradictory and impossible. Therefore, it is also absurd to suppose that being came out of being.

The above argument is based on the assumption that being is one. So, if all being is one, it must have either always been or could not ever be; anyway, it could not be self-generated. This rational necessity of being is inescapable. Since being is, therefore, it cannot have been generated. This argument, however, fails to see the difference between necessary being and

[159] Samuel Enoch Stumpf, *Socrates to Sartre*, p. 16
[160] *Ibid*, pp. 16, 17

contingent being, as Classical Christian theology sees. Only the Divine exists as a necessary eternal being. All other is contingent upon the Divine and created by Him. It must be admitted, however, that this Christian notion of created contingency is not a rational achievement but a revealed doctrine. The fact of the matter is that rational philosophy can only admit and "see" that something cannot proceed out of nothing. Even Aristotle's Prime Mover can only be a mover with respect to a universe that already is; it does not create the universe out of nothing and then moves them.[161] In Will Durant's words, "God does not create, but he moves, the world…"[162]

Thus, it has been seen that the Ionian philosophers had searched for unity in diversity, for a permanent reality underlying change. Heraclitus, however, concluded that change itself was the only thing that was permanent. According to him, the search for a permanent material substratum is profitless. But, then, Parmenides came and denied even the reality of change. Change, according to Parmenides was impossible. Whenever change is thought about, the result is incoherent.[163] Further, Parmenides has argued that reality or being is one, permanent, ungenerated, indestructible, and unchanging. The rational search for ultimate reality thus ended in monism.

To the attacks of the pluralists, Zeno of Elea, disciple of Parmenides offered several arguments in form of paradoxes that demonstrated the utter absurdity of commonsense realism. Since absurdity is a sign of falsity, it is false that reality is many. Hence, Zeno argues that reality must be one. It may be noted that the paradox may also mean, contrary to Zeno's contention, that reason is false and experience is true. However, since it is difficult to label reason as false without the use of reason itself, the certainty of rational reality looms over that of experience. Few of Zeno's most famous proofs are as follows:

The Paradoxes of Plurality

The Argument from Denseness

> If there are many, they must be as many as they are and neither more nor less than that. But if they are as many as they are, they would be limited. If there are many, things that are are unlimited. For there are always others between the things that are, and again others between those, and so the things that are are unlimited.[164]

The paradox is that things appear to be as many as they are, that is as limited, whereas rationally speaking they must be unlimited; a pair of two is separated by a third, which pairing with its next

[161] Justin D. Kaplan (ed.), *The Pocket Aristotle*, pp. 138, 148, 155.
[162] Will Durant, *The Story of Philosophy*, p.71
[163] "Parmenides: Stage 1," http://faculty.washington.edu/smcohen/320/parm1.htm
[164] Simplicius as cited in "Zeno's Paradoxes," http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/paradox-zeno/

is separated by a fourth, and so on *ad infinitum.* Thus, the view that reality is many, or numbered plurality, involves a rational impossibility.

The assumption is that it takes something to separate an other. That means that if the 'separator' theory is abandoned the paradox doesn't exist. Why can't it be said that the things are separated by the void? In that sense, the void (meaning nothing) could rationally not separate anything; for to be separated by nothing is not to be separated at all. However, if empirically understood, the void (space) separates things in the sense that in between things there is the void. Thus, the rational-empirical paradoxical situation is not resolved but heightened by the different meanings of void by reason and experience. The paradox, consequently exists because the rational (immaterial) is applied to the empirical (material) and the fusion creates an either/or situation in which experience is ultimately dismissed as illusion.

The Argument from Finite Size

> … if it should be added to something else that exists, it would not make it any bigger. For if it were of no size and was added, it cannot increase in size. And so it follows immediately that what is added is nothing. But if when it is subtracted, the other thing is no smaller, nor is it increased when it is added, clearly the thing being added or subtracted is nothing.
>
> But if it exists, each thing must have some size and thickness, and part of it must be apart from the rest. And the same reasoning holds concerning the part that is in front. For that too will have size and part of it will be in front. Now it is the same thing to say this once and to keep saying it forever. For no such part of it will be last, nor will there be one part not related to another. Therefore, if there are many things, they must be both small and large; so small as not to have size, but so large as to be unlimited.[165]

The first part of the argument which purports to show that if there are many things they cannot possess size is missing. The second part shows that if they do not possess size they are nothing. The third part shows that if reality is plural and, thus, composed of different parts, the following paradox results: Each part is divided into a front and a rear part. Each front and the rear part have a front and a rear part of their own respectively, and so on *ad infinitum*. Thus, the size would be zero and unlimited, which is paradoxical.

The Argument from Complete Divisibility

1. If a line segment is composed of a multiplicity of points, then the line segment is infinitely divisible; that is to say an infinite number of bisections can be made in it. One cannot come to a point where further bisection of the line segment is not mathematically

[165] *Ibid.*

possible. No singular point can thus be found. Therefore, a line segment is not composed of a multiplicity of points.

2. The line, which is made up of points, has a particular measurement (just as many points as it is and nothing more) and so is limited. It is a definite number, and a definite number is a finite or limited number. However, since the line is infinitely divisible, it is also unlimited. Therefore, it's contradictory to suppose a line is composed of a multiplicity of points.[166]

Speaking thus, then, the existence of plurality is rationally impossible. For, according to each of the above the paradox of the limited and unlimited can be seen. Rationally speaking, things, if not one but many, involve infinity by divisibility. However, they must of necessity be limited in order to be numbered as many. Thus, the phenomenal experience is proved to be rationally untenable.

The Paradoxes of Motion

The Dichotomy

> The first asserts the non-existence of motion on the ground that that which is in locomotion must arrive at the half-way stage before it arrives at the goal.[167]

Suppose a runner is standing at point A and must reach point B in order to finish the race. The only way he can reach point B is by reaching the halfway point, say A_1, between A and B, before reaching B. But then the only way he can reach halfway point A_1 is by reaching the halfway point, say A_2, between A and A_1, and so on *ad infinitum* in order to finish the course. Thus in order for the runner to reach point B, he will have to traverse an infinite number of points in a finite time, which is impossible. Therefore, motion is absurd.

Achilles and the Tortoise

Suppose Achilles and a tortoise begin a race. Achilles allows the tortoise to have the head start since he is confident that the slow tortoise will never win the race. But now in order for Achilles to get past by the tortoise, he will first have to reach the point left behind by tortoise; but by that time the tortoise would have already gone by farther from the point, and so on *ad infinitum*. In other words, if A_1 is the point where the tortoise is presently and Achilles has to reach this point before he can overtake the tortoise, by the time Achilles would have got to point A_1 the tortoise would have gone a bit away and be at point A_2 which would then become the next point which Achilles would have to reach in order to overtake the tortoise, but by the time he gets to A_2 the

[166] "Zeno of Elea," http://www.utm.edu/research/iep/z/zenoelea.htm
[167] Aristotle as cited in "Zeno's Paradoxes," http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/paradox-zeno/

tortoise would have gone a bit more farther, and so on *ad infinitum*. In this way, logically Achilles can never overtake the tortoise. But empirically Achilles is seen to overtake the tortoise, and therein lies the paradox. Empirically Achilles overtakes the tortoise but logically he cannot. And since overtaking the tortoise is seen as logically absurd, it cannot be true.

The Arrow

Consider an apparently flying arrow, in any instant. At any given moment, the arrow occupies a particular position in space equal to its length. But for an arrow to occupy a position in space equal to its length means that it is at rest. However, since the arrow must always occupy such a position in space equal to its length, the arrow must be at rest at all moments. Moreover, since space as quantity is infinitely divisible, the flying arrow occupies an infinite number of these positions of rest. But the sum of an infinite number of these positions of rest is not a motion. Therefore, the arrow is never in motion. The absurd conclusion would then be that the flying arrow is ever at rest, which is impossible. Therefore, motion is false.

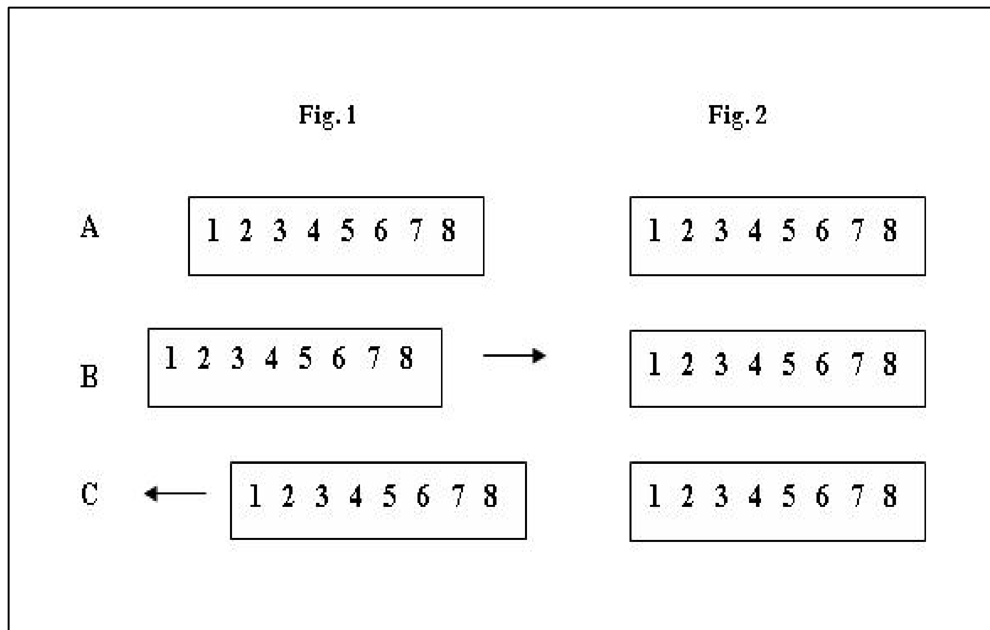
The Stadium

> The fourth argument is that concerning equal bodies [*AA*] which move alongside equal bodies in the stadium from opposite directions – the ones from the end of the stadium [*CC*], the others from the middle [*BB*] – at equal speeds, in which he thinks it follows that half the time is equal to its double…. And it follows that the *C* has passed all the *A*s and the *B* half; so that the time is half … . And at the same time it follows that the first *B* has passed all the *C*s.[168]

The stadium is an argument from the relativity of motion to the absurdity of motion. Stumpf [169] has a good illustration of passenger cars for this argument. Imagine three passenger cars of equal length on tracks parallel to each other, each car having eight windows on a side (see Figures 1 & 2).

---

[168] Aristotle as cited in "Zeno's Paradoxes," http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/paradox-zeno/
[169] Samuel Enoch Stumpf, *Socrates to Sartre*, p. 20



One of the cars is at rest; the others, moving in opposite directions at the same speed. In order for the two cars (B & C) moving in opposite direction of car A, to come to the position in Fig. 2, car B's front has to cross one more window of car A, while car C has to cross two windows of car B. Each window represents a unit of distance, and each such unit is passed in an equal unit of time. Since car B went past only one of car A's windows, while car C went past two of car B's windows, and since each window represents the same unit of time, it would have to follow that one unit of time is equal to two units of time or that one unit of distance equals two units of distance, which is absurd. The mathematical solution to this third paradox is as follows:

Speed of car B towards A	=	S m/s
Speed of car C towards A	=	S m/s
Speed of car C towards B	=	2S m/s
Distance to complete motion	=	2D (2 windows or units)
Time needed to complete motion	=	2D/2S
	=	D/S = 1unit of time

Therefore, one unit of time was needed for car C to cross the two windows of car B. The paradox is, thus, resolved; nevertheless, at the expense of absolute motion. The only way this paradox is solved is by accepting that no absolute motion exists. Motion is relative. The speed of car C, thus is seen to be twice greater in relation to car B, than car A. But saying that no absolute motion exists is similar to saying that motion does not exist. What may seem to be motion to one may not seem to be motion to another, and so on. Thus, no absolute statement regarding motion can be made. Thereby, then, Zeno wins.

Thus, the phenomenal world of empirical plurality is shown to be false. The main parts of the arguments of Parmenides and Zeno are summarized as follows:

1. Being cannot arise out of non-being, for then it would have to be even before it arises out of non-being; therefore, being is eternal and ungenerated.[170]
2. Being is indivisible, for it cannot divide itself from itself.
3. Being is one and not many, for if it were many it would have to be diversely differentiated by something other than being, namely non-being, which means to be differentiated by nothing.
4. Being cannot be falsified; for if spoken of, it must be; if not spoken of, then nothing is spoken of. If being is not, then nothing is.
5. Being is indestructible, for change cannot be predicated of it, it being absolute.
6. The phenomenon of plurality is absurd, for it involves the paradox of the limited and the unlimited in the one divisible unit.
7. The phenomenon of change is absurd, for it involves completion of an infinite series in a finite time, as Zeno's paradoxes show.

Thus, reality is one, eternal, indestructible, immutable, and thus, absolute.

Implications for Divine Existence

Either of the following implications results from the supposition that being is eternal and singular:

1. God is being and the only one reality; all plurality of selves is an illusion.
2. God as an ontological distinct does not exist, for reality is one.
3. God is not, only being is; if the individual definitions of 'God' and 'being' are to be retained and not confused.

However, though Parmenides and Zeno have attempted to solve the ontological problem of the nature of reality, they have left the cosmological problem of the same unanswered. If reality is

[170] Samuel Enoch Stumpf, *Socrates to Sartre*, pp. 16, 17

one, what accounts for the plurality that is manifest; or why does or how did reality come to appear as many? To this Parmenides and Zeno remain silent, and since a theory that doesn't take into consideration the whole avenue of the subject in question cannot be considered to be complete and unified, attention must be turned to the Indian philosophers to see whether they have a rational answer to this cosmological question. Nevertheless, this far the contradictions between reason and experience have been aptly demonstrated by the Grecians. And the culmination of their rational search in the Eleatics was anticipated; for if reason alone is trustworthy, then experience must be dispensed with, as Zeno clearly showed.

Critique

Finally, as seen earlier, the rational search has been chiefly driven by the characteristics that define reason itself; hence, the results are seen to be of the nature of the same. As was seen earlier, *A priori* or rational truths have at least five characteristics that distinguish them as rational truths; they are: unity, necessity, immutability, transcendence, and strict universality. In accordance, the rational search has revealed that reality is a unity (one); it necessarily exists (cannot be thought of not to exist), is immutable (motionless, changeless), transcendent (that is, this world being an illusion, reality cannot be this world), and finally strict universality meaning that reality is indivisible and contiguous to itself. Thus, the rational results have only been a mirror of reason itself.

Now, attention must be turned to the rationalists among the Indian philosophers to see how they explain the unity and plurality of the universe. But before doing that it will be helpful to see Aristotle's response to the Eleatic doctrine.

Aristotle's Criticism of the Early Greek Theories. Proceeding from the hypothesis that substance is the primary subject of philosophical inquiry, Aristotle thought himself to find good company in the early philosophers, who according to him, testified to the primacy of substance. Accordingly he writes:

> ...And the early philosophers also in practice testify to the primacy of substance; for it was of substance that they sought the principles and elements and causes. The thinkers of the present day tend to rank universals as substances (for genera are universals, and these they tend to describe as principles and substances, owing to the abstract nature of their inquiry); e.g., fire and earth, not what is common to both, body.[171]

However, he rejects the early philosophers' identification of the primary substance with either matter or abstract idea.[172] Nevertheless, the search for unity in diversity was a noble goal that philosophy had undertaken. But matter cannot be substance, since change is predicable of matter,

[171] Justin D. Kaplan (ed.), *The Pocket Aristotle*, p.137
[172] *Ibid*, pp. 125-136

and matter can be acted upon by some other cause. Secondly, since matter is changeable (by addition, formation, division, or subtraction), it is complex and, therefore, cannot be the primary substance.[173] Only the form (the essence) of a thing is its primary substance. And substances as the primary existents are not all indestructible. For if they are all destructible then all things are destructible. But movement and time cannot have either originated or can cease to be. Time moves, therefore, time is either the same thing as movement or an attribute of movement.[174] Since movement is eternal, eternal movement must have a Prime Mover. God as Prime Mover of the universe is the basis for unity and purposefulness of nature.[175] God is perfect and therefore the prime desire or aspiration of all things in the world which desire to share perfection and move from potential existence to actual or fulfilled existence. However, as seen earlier, this God does not create the universe out of nothing; He or It only moves it.[176]

Moreover, Aristotle is a pluralist and a naturalist. To him the unifying substances of things do not exist in a different world of platonic ideas. They are present in the things themselves. The form or substance of a thing is not separable from its material dimension in the same manner that candle is not separable from wax. Each substance is thus found to be in multiple instances and one comes to know of the universal substance from the particulars that instantiate it. Thus, reality is plural and the Eleatics and all those who supposed reality to be one were wrong. And, thus also, phenomenal reality is retained. But did Aristotle answer all the rational problems adequately? Of course, not, because they offer no explanation about the paradoxes and contradictions inherent in the conception of the world as plurality, which the Eleatics, especially Zeno, have demonstrated.

Aristotle's Prime Mover as solution to the problem of infinite causal succession (infinite chain of movers and moved) is said to have no magnitude, thus as without parts and indivisible. This since, if it was said to have finite magnitude, it would have finite power making it incapable of producing eternal movement (which is required since movement has to be eternal even as time as movement is eternal) in infinite time. However, if it was said to have infinite magnitude, then reality doesn't reveal anything like that: as a matter of fact, any infinite magnitude would immediately rule out any other existence; thus, ***being would be one.*** And so to escape this situation, Aristotle hypothesizes that the Prime Mover has no magnitude.[177] But, if finite magnitude means finite power and infinite magnitude means infinite power, then it follows that no magnitude means no power. And so, this Prime Mover is converted into the object of universal desire and some other unmoved movers are brought into scene to account for the physical movements of, say, the heavenly bodies. But again, neither of these substances or

---

[173] *Ibid*, p. 20
[174] *Ibid*, p. 143
[175] "Aristotle," *Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia* (Microsoft Corporation, 2001)
[176] Will Durant, *The Story of Philosophy*, p.71
[177] Justin D. Kaplan (ed.), *The Pocket Aristotle*, pp. 147, 148

unmoved movers possesses magnitude for the same above reason.[178] Then, neither of them also can be thought of possessing power to move. Then, what is the first source of motion. The question, thus, is not efficiently answered. But even if motion could be accounted for, it has already been proved by Zeno that such motion would be rationally untenable.

Moreover, Aristotle's argument against Parmenides' One is prejudiced and weak. According to Aristotle, Parmenides starts with a wrong premise that being can only mean one thing; therefore, the deductions are also false. Seen with reference to Aristotelian logic, Parmenides' theory has semantic confusions and involves a problem of definitions.

1. What is the meaning of the statement that all things are one? Does it mean that all things "are" substance or quantities or qualities? For if substance, then are all things one man, one horse, or one soul? If quality, then are all things white or hot or something of the kind? But if both substance and quantity are, then whether these exist independently or each other or not, Being will be many. It is impossible that all things are only either quality or quantity; for nothing except substance can exist independently. Substance[179] alone is independent and everything is predicated of substance as subject.[180]
2. If being is many and not one, then change is possible – "in place, if not in substance."[181]
3. Parmenides' assumption that one is used in a single sense only is false, because it is used in several. For instance, though white is one, what is white will be many and not one: there are many things that are white. In the same way, though being has a single meaning, what is, is many and not one: there are many things that are white. For in the same manner that 'whiteness' and 'that which is white' differ in definition, not in the sense that they are things which can exist apart from each other, 'being' and 'that which is' differ in definition, not in the sense that they are things which can exist apart from each other. Hence, being is many. Being can be said of substances or of qualities or of quantities. Thus, being has more than one sense: it has a primary sense (when spoken about substances; e.g., The horse is) and related senses (when spoken of qualities or quantities; e.g., The horse is white).
4. But if being were to assume independence from the others, nothing else would be; for they would all be different from being, that is to say, they will be non-being. But then, if in case being is attributed in this sense to a subject, then the subject (which is different from being and therefore) which is not will be. Hence, 'substance' will not be a predicate of anything else; for to say that a subject is substance would immediately imply that the subject is something and not nothing, that is, it is; whereas nothing other than being can

[178] *Ibid*, p. 149
[179] According to Aristotle, substance is the form or essence of a thing by virtue of which the thing receives individual identity. That is, it is that which sets apart the thing as a member of a distinct class. Only substance can be defined, its essence can be given a formula.
[180] Justin D. Kaplan (ed.), *The Pocket Aristotle*, p. 6
[181] *Ibid*, p. 146

be, unless being has more than one meaning. But if ‘substance’ cannot be attributed to anything, but other things are attributed to it, then how can ‘substance’ be spoken in terms of what it is? For suppose that ‘substance’ is ‘white,’ it follows that ‘substance’ is not-being (because ‘white’ is different from being), thus ‘substance’ is nothing.[182]

Subject	is	a	being	
(not-being)	is	a	being	(contradiction)

Subject	is	substance	
(not-being)	is	(a being)	(contradiction)

Substance	is	white	
(a being)	is	(not-being)	(contradiction)

1. Substance is plainly divisible into other substances, if the mere nature of a definition were considered. Thus, in the definition of man as a biped animal, if ‘man’ is a substance then, ‘biped’ and ‘animal’ must also be substances. If they are not so then ‘biped’ and ‘animal’ must be attributes. But attributes are not necessarily definitive of substance (for instance, in the statement ‘man is white,’ ‘white’ is attribute of man and not definition of man); therefore, man is not necessarily a biped animal. But if ‘biped’ and ‘animal’ are not substances but attributes of something else, then ‘man’ also, by nature of the definition, is not a substance but an attribute of something else. Thus, substance is divisible and being cannot be one but many.

    If attribute = a

    Substance = s

    then,

    Man (s) is a biped (s) animal (s)

    If not so then,

[182] *Ibid*, pp. 9-11

Man (s) is a biped (a) animal (a)

Thus, man is not necessarily a biped animal.

But if, 'biped' and 'animal' are attributes of another subject, then

Subject is biped animal (a)

Biped animal is man (a)

Subject is man (a)

Thus, according to Aristotle, being cannot be one in the sense that all is a continuous monad. Further, being can only be thought in relation to substance and not by itself in abstraction. That is, being can only be a particular substance. But if being is substance, then since substance is by definition divisible into other substances, being is many and not one.

However, Aristotle seems to have misunderstood Parmenides. Parmenides' singular reality is not a substance after the kind of a man, which is divisible into other substances. Yet, his objection to the differentiation of 'being' from that 'which is' bears weight to the issue. Can being be thought apart from that which is? If it cannot be thought to be so, then in that sense being has already been shown to be more than one; for if something is not being then it is not. And then, if it is a being by partaking of being, then the contradiction of nothing as something results, as seen (3) above. But if something is not separable from being, then it is. But then, what is it? It must be something. Thus, substance as a being is divisible into many substances and thus, being is many and not one.

But to Parmenides, what is cannot be divisible; for divisibility means the separation of what is from itself, which is impossible.[183] The following argument shows why being cannot be divisible in the sense that things cannot logically differ from each other:

1. Reality is either one or many
2. If reality is many, then the many things must differ from each other.
3. But there are only two ways things can differ: either by being (something) or by non-being (nothing).
4. However, two (or more) things cannot differ by nothing, for to differ by nothing means not to differ at all.

[183] "Parmenides," http://www.abu.nb.ca/Courses/GrPhil/Parmenides.htm

5. Neither can things differ by something or being, because being is the only thing that everything has in common, and things cannot differ in the very respect in which they are the same.
6. Therefore, things cannot differ at all; everything is one.[184]

Even if it was said that things that are differ from each other by differences of shape, composition, etc., it would still remain that they only differ superficially and not ultimately. So the differences are only superficial, that is as they appear to us. The substratum, namely being, is one and contiguous. But if being as the substratum of the universe is one, then how do the superficial differences come to be or appear to be so? Both Parmenides and Zeno answer by saying that the appearances are false but do not seem to explain how they come to appear so, as has already been seen. Attention must now, therefore, be turned to the *advaitins* of Indian philosophy.

The *Advaitin* Search for Unity in Diversity

Advaita philosophy is deeply religious and epistemologically based. The chief problem is ignorance and the way to ultimate liberation is by realization of Truth. *Advaita* means non-dual and refers to the doctrine that reality is ultimately non-dual in nature and all plurality and diversity manifest in nature is only illusory. Liberation consists in the dissolution of the knower-known duality. To quote from the Brhadaranyaka Upanishad:

> Because when there is duality, as it were, then one smells something, one sees something, one hears something, one speaks something, one thinks something, one knows something. (But) when to the knower of Brahman everything has become the Self, then what should one smell and through what, what should one see and through what, what should one hear and through what, what should one speak and through what, what should one think and through what, what should one know and through what? Through what should one know That owing to which all this is known – through what, O Maitreyi, should one know the Knower?[185]

The doctrine of *advaita* (non-dualism) has its origin in the Upanishads though the systematization of it was eventually done by Shankaracharya (788-820 A.D.), a Brahmin from Kerala and disciple of Gaudapada whose *Karika* (expository treatise) on the Mandukya Upanishad contains the roots of *advaita siddhanta* (doctrine of non-dualism).

The Upanishads formed a portion of the Hindu Scriptures, viz. the Vedas. They were, in fact, part of the Aranyakas which were themselves a part of the Brahmana portion of the Vedas. Many

---

[184] Norman L. Geisler and Paul D. Feinberg, *Introduction to Philosophy* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1980), p. 168

[185] *The Brhadaranyaka Upanisad*, II.iv.14 (trans. Swami Madhavananda; Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1997), p. 259

of the Upanishadic doctrines originated among the Kshatriyas independent of the Brahmanas and Aranyakas which formed the sacred lore of the Brahmins.[186]

The word Upanishad is considered to have been derived from the root 'sad' meaning to sit down, and the prepositions 'upa' meaning near, and 'ni' meaning down. Thus, 'Upanishad' etymologically meant 'to sit down near' the teacher.[187] Some disagree to the meaning of 'sad' as 'to sit down' and think that it should rather be interpreted as 'destruction or approaching'; thus, meaning by 'Upanishad' that which destroys ignorance by revelation of the Truth. It is, however, unanimously agreed upon that the Upanishads were secret teachings meant for the few who desired to know the truth.

Of the many Upanishads that exist (over 108), the Mundakya Upanishad is considered to best embody the doctrine of non-dualism. In only twelve mantras, it is thought as have packed into a nutshell all the wisdom of the Upanishads.[188] Together with the Gaudapada Karika and Shankara's commentary on it, it forms a powerful argument for the inevitability of non-dual reality. In this research, the Mandukya Upanishad with Gaudapada's Karika and Shankara's commentary will be chiefly studied to find the rational epistemics inherent in their conception of reality as non-dual.

While for the Greeks physical reality was a major concern, for the Indians conscious reality was the major concern. While the Greeks tried to find what the unifying basis of all physical reality was as such, the Indians wanted to find what the unifying basis of all conscious reality was as such. The Greeks began from physics and proceeded on to metaphysics. The Indians began from the self, from consciousness, and proceeded on to metaphysics. The Greeks tried to analyze the known in order to understand the known. The Indian analyzed the knower in order to understand the known. Thus, the Indian quest for ultimate reality can be described as a search for a psychological basis of the universe.

This has several implications:

1. In the search for the external, one begins with the attempt to first understand the internal, viz. consciousness.
2. Before knowing what is out there, one begins with the attempt to first understand why knowing even exists.
3. If consciousness as one experiences it is false, then all quest no matter how scientific it appears will be wrong headed. But if consciousness as one experiences it is true, then the quest can end up in truth.

---

[186] Swami Madhavananda, *Minor Upanishads* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1996), p. vi
[187] *Ibid*, p. viii
[188] Swami Krishnananda, *The Mandukya Upanishad* (Rishikesh: The Divine Life Society, 1996), p. 7

4. The problem is not why something exists, but why something such as consciousness exists. The knower is thus the starting point.
5. Liberation, thus, becomes noetic; knowledge of the Truth brings salvation.
6. No wonder, then, in advaita the Brahman is called Sat-chit-ananda, meaning Being-Consciousness-Bliss, with pure consciousness as the essence of being and bliss; bliss being that condition of being as consciousness in which no distraction or strife by virtue of duality exists.

The words "Brahman," "Self," "Reality," "Lord," "God," and "Consciousness," in the personal noun form refer to the Absolute and Ultimate Reality, Brahman. Following, then, is a brief exposition of the rational method employed in the search for reality as contained in the Mandukya Upanishad[189], and Gaudapada's Karika and Shankara's Commentary on it:

1. An analysis of consciousness shows that consciousness has four states; therefore, the Self has four quarters:

a. *Vaisvanara*, whose sphere of activity is the waking state of external-world consciousness in which sensible objects are apprehended as real.

b. *Taijasa*, whose sphere of activity is the dreaming sleep state of internal-world consciousness in which dream objects are apprehended as real.

c. *Prajna*, whose sphere of activity is the dreamless sleep state of undifferentiated consciousness in which all being finds origin and dissolution, i.e., as doorway to the experience of the dream and waking states.

d. *Turiya* (Self), whose sphere of activity is the state of neither internal-world consciousness nor external-world consciousness nor undifferentiated consciousness nor unconsciousness. *Atman* is uninferable, unthinkable, and indescribable; the Self that is unchanging, auspicious, and non-dual.[190]

2. The fourth quarter is inferred from the first three as the only reality that answers to the first three. The fourth is not just different from the first three; it is, in fact, the only reality into which all the others merge on realization. The analogy is explained by analysis of the word *Om.*

a. The word *Om* is made up of three letters, *a, u,* and *m.*

---

[189] *Mandukya Upanishad, with the Karika of Gaudapada and the Commentary of Sankaracarya* (trans. Swami Gambhirananda; Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1995).

[190] Mandukya Upanishad 7, *Ibid*, p. 34

b. *A* refers to *Vaisvanara,* which is first and pervasive, i.e., all experience is pervaded by it.

c. *U* refers to *Taijasa,* which is intermediate to the waking and undifferentiated states, even as *u* is intermediate to *a* and *m*.

d. *M* refers to *Prajna,* the undifferentiated state of consciousness as a mass, which is absorptive: that from which the waking and dreaming quarters proceed and in which they end, even as in the pronunciation of *Om,* both *a* and *u* end in and rise from *m.*

e. *Om* refers to *Turiya*, the non-dual consciousness, which is neither this nor that, the culmination of phenomenal world. Thus, it is the one in which the first three states of consciousness merge at realization even as *a, u,* and *m* merge into *Om* on pronunciation.

Thus, the Mandukya purports to show that the *Om* is *Turiya* – beyond all conventional dealings, the limit of the negation of the phenomenal world, the auspicious, and the non-dual. *Om* is thus the Self to be sure, it says, and he who knows thus enters the Self through the self. Thus, the waking self can realize itself as *Turiya,* the true Self. Table 1 illustrates the above.

3. Gaudapada goes on to prove how the first three states of consciousness are false and not real, while the partless *Atman* is the only reality and the substratum to all other experiences. Gaudapada's Karika consists of four *prakaranas* (chapters) of which the first is interspersed between the passages of the Mandukya Upanishad.

Table 1. The Four Quarters of the Self in Mandukya Upanisad

QUARTERS	*OM*	STATE	ATTRIBUTES

Turiya (Atman)	***Om***	Self as it is – Birthless, Sleepless, Dreamless, Nameless, Formless	Super-Consciousness
Prajna	***m***	Self in Deep Sleep State	Mass of Consciousness
Taijasa	***u***	Self in Dream State	Internal Consciousness
Vaisvanara (Visva)	***a***	Self in Waking State	External Consciousness

An outline of the four *prakaranas* is as follows:

a. Agama-Prakarana - It is a discourse on the Vedic text, *viz.* the Mandukya Upanishad.

b. Vaitathya-Prakarana - It is a rational discourse on unreality. Having ascertained the meaning of the Vedic text in the earlier chapter, it now purports to rationally demonstrate the unreality of the phenomenal world.

c. Advaita-Prakarana - It is a rational discourse on non-duality. Having shown that the phenomenal cannot be real on logical grounds, it now purports to rationally establish the verity of non-duality on logical grounds.

d. Alatasanti-Prakarana - It is the chapter on quenching the firebrand, in which the firebrand is used as an illustration of Consciousness in vibration giving rise to appearances. It also purports to prove as false all opposing theories and demonstrate the finality of the *advaita* doctrine as well show the way of quenching of the firebrand, i.e., liberation from duality.

The arguments are as follows:

Argument from Dream

1. Objects perceived in a dream are false since they cannot be located in finite body (II.1, 2).

2. Objects perceived in the dream and the waking states, being common in the sense of both being perceived, are similar and, therefore, one (II.4, 5).
3. Therefore, objects perceived in the waking states are as false as objects perceived in the dream state.

This argument is reminiscent of the old Chinese philosopher's question: If I dreamed I was a butterfly and awoke to find myself a man, how do I know whether I was a man who dreamed I was a butterfly or was a butterfly dreaming I am a man? The above argument of Gaudapada may be reinstated in the following manner:

1. Since consciousness is one, its perception must be consistent.
2. To say that objects in dream are false but objects in the waking state are real is to say that consciousness is inconsistent in perceiving things.
3. But if consciousness is inconsistent, then truth cannot be known for certain.
4. Since the objects in dream are obviously false from the standpoint of the waking state, it must be inferred that the objects in the waking state are false from another standpoint, and so on, in order that consistency of consciousness be maintained.
5. The standpoints cannot be infinite; therefore a final condition of consciousness must exist.
6. In the final analysis, it must, for the sake of consistency, be maintained that the objects of both the dream and waking states are false.
7. Therefore, the objects of both the dream and waking states are false and phenomenal plurality as it appears is unreal.

The dream and waking states point to subjective idealism. Though the objects of the dream and waking states can be denied reality, reality cannot be denied to consciousness itself. Thus, consciousness itself is the substratum to the objects of perception. And consciousness is non-different from the experiencer as Shankara explains:

> The creatures visible to a waking man are non-different from his consciousness, since they are perceived through consciousness, just like the creatures perceived by the consciousness of a dreamer. And that consciousness, again, engaged in the perception of creatures, is non-different from the experiencer, since it is perceived by the experiencer, like the consciousness in the dream state.[191]

Thus, Consciousness alone is the only reality and plurality of objects is super-imposed on it.

Gaudapada's dismissal of the phenomenal reality of waking state on the basis of his dismissal of the phenomenal reality of the dream state might be unjustified extrapolation, in the sense of

[191] Comment on Karika IV. 65-66, *Mandukya Upanisad,* p. 209

certainty of knowledge. For by his argument only a probability emerges: this phenomenal reality of the waking state *might probably be* as unreal from another state of consciousness as the phenomenal reality of the dream state is unreal to the waking state. But how does one know whether or not the waking state is the rock-bottom state of consciousness? On what basis is another higher state of consciousness assumed? Gaudapada doesn't give a clear answer, demonstrating the hypothesis-drive of his reasoning. Faith seems to form a strong basis for the rationality of Gaudapada.

Argument from Immortality of Soul (III. 19-22; IV. 7-10)

This is an argument directed at those believers in rebirth who vouch for the immortality of the soul. It demonstrates that if the soul is immortal it cannot undergo mortality.

1. A thing can never change in its nature (as fire cannot change its heat).
2. The soul is immortal by nature.
3. Therefore, the soul can never become mortal, i.e., it can never pass into birth.

By the word 'nature' Gaudapada means 'that which is permanently acquired (*samsiddiki*), or is intrinsic (*svabhaviki*), instinctive (*sahaja*), non-produced (*akrita*), or unchanging in character (*svabhavam na jahati ya*).'[192] With this definition in view, he writes: "All souls are intrinsically (*svabhavatah*, by nature) free from old age and death."[193] Consequently, saying that a soul becomes mortal by birth is to say that the soul becomes the opposite of itself in nature by birth, which is a contradiction in terms, seeing that the soul was first called immortal by nature and nature was defined as that which is *permanently* acquired. Therefore, if the soul is immortal it cannot become mortal in anyway. Thus, those who believe in the immortality of soul cannot rationally also sustain the theory that the phenomenon of birth and death is true. Hence, phenomenal events cannot be true.

Thus, this argument is meant to demonstrate that the phenomenon of birth and its accompanying doctrine of rebirth are rationally inconsistent with the doctrine of the immortality of soul. With reference to the doctrine of rebirth and creation, Gaudapada says: 'Instruction about creation has been imparted by the wise for the sake of those who, from the facts of experience and adequate behaviour, vouch for the existence of substantiality, and who are ever afraid of the birthless entity.'[194]

Contrary to the supposition that souls become mortal at birth, which forms the core of the doctrine that Gaudapada attacks, there is also the belief that the soul never becomes mortal at

[192] IV. 9, *Ibid*, p. 162
[193] IV. 10, *Ibid*, p. 163
[194] IV. 41, *Ibid*, p. 192; the statement has overtones also of the permissiveness of myth for the common folk.

birth; rather it is embodied at birth and gives up the body at death. Thus, the birth or mortality of body doesn't affect the soul.[195] In that case, the phenomenon of birth and decay cannot be dismissed. However, this belief presently doesn't seem to be the concern of Gaudapada.

Argument from Coming to Being (IV. 4)

1. A thing that already exists does not pass into birth (for it already is).
2. A thing that does not pre-exist cannot pass into birth (for something cannot come out of nothing).
3. Therefore, there is no birth.

This argument, similar to Parmenides' argument from coming-into-being, has in perspective not just the material universe but also being as consciousness and arrives at the conclusion by negation of two opposing views held by two different schools Indian philosophy, *viz.* the Sankhya and the Nyaya.

The Sankhya held that 'something cannot come out of nothing; and whatever is, has always been.'[196] Birth is the manifestation of what is already in a latent form. Objects do not come to be; they already are. The Nyaya, on the other hand, held to the doctrine of non-existent effect, which taught that the effect, once non-existent, comes into being afterwards. In other words, something comes out of nothing.[197]

Gaudapada negates both the views by stating that neither the pre-existent nor the non-existent can pass into birth. However, since birth of objects is perceived empirically, phenomenal experience must be false. Thus, both the Sankhya and Nyaya by opposing each other in their views prove that non-dualism is true.

Argument from Disintegration (IV. 11)

1. The only way the cause can take birth is by (at least partial) disintegration of itself.
2. But nothing that disintegrates can be eternal.
3. Therefore, if the cause disintegrates, then it cannot be eternal.
4. But the cause is eternal.
5. Therefore, it cannot disintegrate; i.e., it does not take birth.

This argument is based on the empirical notion that whatever disintegrates cannot be eternal. For instance, a jar that is disintegrable is not eternal. For it will soon be reduced to nothing by

[195] *Srimad Bhagvad-Gita* II. 20-23 (tr. Swami Vireswarananda; Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1974), pp. 38, 39
[196] M. Hiriyanna, *Indian Philosophy*, p. 273
[197] *Ibid*, p. 239

disintegration. Or it at least has the potential to disintegrate, which implies that it is not eternal necessarily, or in the absolute sense. Therefore, if the cause were to be eternal it must not disintegrate. Thus, the doctrine of birth is nullified.

Together with the argument from coming to being, this argument is a strong case for non-dualism. If something cannot come out of nothing, then something must be eternal. If this something is eternal then the phenomenal world is unreal; for eternality evinces birthlessness and non-disintegration. Since the cause must be eternal, therefore the phenomenal world is unreal.

However, the argument loses if it is proven that this eternal cause can create a contingent world out of nothing. But this is rationally difficult since reason lacks any synthetic (empirically demonstrable) way by which it can be proven that something can be created by someone out of nothing. The only cases where such creation out of thin air is seen are in magic or the conjurer's trick. But the result of such creation is illusory and unreal and proof of the doctrine of non-dualism which states that phenomenon is illusory or unreal.

Following are several arguments against the cause-effect theory:

Argument from Sequential Consistency (IV. 15)

1. By analogy, the effect is produced by the cause, even as a son is born of a father.
2. The father cannot be born of the son.
3. Likewise, therefore, the cause cannot be produced from the effect.

This is an argument from analogy against the Sankhya theory of effect within the cause and cause within the effect. It may be argued that the analogy is falsely drawn since it can also be seen that a tree produces the seed and the seed produces a tree. However, the analogy of the seed is begging the question since it stands in par with the analogy of the son (IV. 20). In the case of the seed, the seed produces a tree different from the tree that produced it. In the words of Shankara, "a series does not constitute a single substance."[198] In the same manner the son may produce another son who may become father of another son, but he cannot produce his own father. Likewise, then how can the phenomenal world with the many selves be considered to produce the same cause that produced it, namely *prakriti*?

Answering this analogy is that of the clay jar, which emerges out of clay and, on dissolution (destruction), becomes clay again,[199] the material cause remaining the same throughout. The answer to this analogy is given below.

[198] *Mandukya Upanishad*, p. 184
[199] M. Hiriyanna, *Indian Philosophy*, p. 278

1. Every causal relation has a sequence (wherein the cause precedes the effect).
2. The Sankhya cause and effect are devoid of a sequence.
3. Therefore, the Sankhya cause and effect have no causal relation, which is to say that the cause does not produce the effect.

The argument is a *reductio ad absurdum* wherein it is proved that if cause and effect are co-existent then, it is wrong to state that the cause produces the effect. With reference to the analogy of the clay jar, if the clay and the jar are co-existent, the clay cannot be considered to have produced the jar, since the jar is already there and need not be produced. Thus, the eternality of the cause establishes the impossibility of any further effect, as argued earlier, since the cause as eternal cannot its unlike effect, as the phenomenal world appears to be, nor can it itself undergo disintegration by producing out of itself something, nor can it be said to come into being itself since it already exists. This is capsulated in the following verse:

> A thing, whatsoever it may be, is born neither of itself, nor of something else, (nor of both together). Nothing whatsoever is born that (already) exists, does not exist, or both exists and does not exit.[200]

That is to say that if a thing is said to already exist, it comes into being again either of itself or of something else or of both, since it already exists. Thus, if it exists it cannot come into being; if it does not exist it cannot come into being (for it cannot produce itself neither can something come out of nothing), and if it said to both exist and not exist it cannot come into being. Thus, if the cause is already in existence, then it alone remains and no further effect like or unlike itself is possible. Consequently, the phenomenal world as a transitory effect cannot be true.

Having established the falsity of the phenomenal world and its objects, Gaudapada goes on to admit that external objects as they appear do exist from the standpoint of experience, say of color, pain, etc (IV. 24); however, this perception of external objects is relative to the present experience only. From the standpoint of ultimate reality, no external objects as cause of perception exist (IV. 25). As Shankara explains, on account of finding the external object to be unreal, it is not admitted to be the cause of knowledge, just as a snake seen on a rope is not. Besides, Shankara says, the cause is not a cause, since it is the content of an erroneous perception; and as such, it ceases to be so when the error is removed. Thus, the phenomenal world does not exist in the absolute sense. Accordingly, no external objects exist.

However, it may be said that this assumes the world as the only reality. This argument itself proceeds from the assumption that all Being is one. It then, logically follows that this Being is either self-caused, caused, or uncaused. It is impossible for it to be self-caused (born of itself) or

[200] Karika IV. 22, *Mandukya Upanisad*, p. 173

caused (born of something else). But if Being is not caused then, it alone is eternal and devoid of all motions. Thus, phenomena as the panorama of cause and effect must be false.

Proceeding from this conclusion the argument goes on.

Argument from Perception and Being (IV. 26-28)

1. If external objects do not exist then consciousness has no contact with them.
2. External objects do not exist.
3. Therefore, consciousness has no contact with them.
4. However, if consciousness exists it should be eternal (for as already seen if it once was not, it cannot come to be).
5. Consciousness exists.
6. Therefore, it is eternal (has no birth).
7. Consequently, consciousness is eternal and external objects perceived by it do not come into being as they appear to be so.

However, if it is contended that the transitory phenomenal world does exist, then the following arguments are in answer.

Argument from Eternality (IV. 30)

1. If something is beginningless then it is also endless.
2. The phenomenal world is said to be beginningless.
3. Therefore, it is also endless.

This implicitly would mean that the world has no possibility of emancipation from the problem of pain for ever. However if the phenomenal world had a beginning then it cannot have eternal emancipation as the following argument shows:

Argument from Beginning

1. If any thing has a beginning then it has an end.
2. Liberation has a beginning.
3. Therefore liberation has an end, that is to say it is not eternal.

However, since it has been proved that the phenomenal world has no reality apart from the present waking state similar to the dream state, the phenomenal world which only is in the middle and neither in the beginning and the end of the waking state is unreal (IV. 31). The phenomenal world is called real only in the same way that an elephant conjured up by magic is

called real by depending on perception and adequate behaviour. However, the magician's elephant does not exist, so neither does the phenomenal world exist.

On the final analysis, everything can be doubted but consciousness cannot be doubted. And if consciousness exists, it must be eternal; for it cannot come into existence either by itself or by something else. Further on, since the soul is birthless, reincarnation and birth is false. External objects share in similarity with internal objects of dream and therefore do not exist; thus, the phenomenal world is unreal from the standpoint of ultimate reality even as the dream world is unreal from the standpoint of phenomenal reality. If the phenomenal world were true then, there could be nothing eternal and cessation of the world would have occurred already as is written: "It is beyond question that the phenomenal world (*prapancah*) would cease to be if it had any existence…" (I. 18). Obviously, since temporality and transitoriness is characteristic of the world in which birth and death of things is the only empirical fact. As such, then, there could be nothing eternal. But perhaps it may be said that phenomenal reality is created by a transcendent absolute reality in the sense that both are equally real.

But phenomenal reality cannot be causally related to absolute reality: If the cause is birthless then the effect must be birthless which is contradictory; if cause and effect are simultaneous then causal relation does not exist meaning the cause did not cause the effect, which is contradictory; if the effect and cause are mutually causative then, the father-son contradiction results. Thus, phenomenal reality cannot be the product of an uncaused cause. If it is not the product of creation then, of course, implicitly, all change, motion, and birth lacks an ultimate causal relation. Therefore, the phenomenal world has no real existence. Thus, from the absolute standpoint, only Consciousness or the Self is Reality.

> Everything seems to be born because of the empirical outlook; therefore there is nothing that is eternal. From the standpoint of Reality, everything is the birthless Self; therefore there is no such thing as annihilation.[201]

Thus, only "Consciousness – birthless, motionless and non-material, as well as tranquil and non-dual"[202] exists. In the final analysis, by the way, both birth and birthlessness are categories that cannot be applied to Ultimate Reality (IV. 60, 74). However, if consciousness is non-dual, and phenomenal reality is unreal, then what accounts for the experience of duality or plurality in the world? To this the following explanation is given:

---

[201] Karika IV. 57, *Mandukya Upanisad*, p. 204
[202] Karika IV. 45, *Mandukya Upanisad*, p. 195

Analogy of the Firebrand

1. As the firebrand appears to be straight or crooked when in movement, so does Consciousness[203] appear to be the knower and the known when in vibration (IV. 47).
2. As the firebrand, when not in motion, becomes free from appearances and birth, so Consciousness, when not in vibration, will be free from appearances and birth (IV. 48).
3. The appearances of the firebrand in motion are not externally caused. Neither do they come from anywhere else nor do they go anywhere else from it (since appearances are not things and so lack substantiality); likewise, when Consciousness is in vibration, the appearances do not come to It from anywhere else, nor do they go anywhere else from It when It is at rest. Appearances lack substantiality and therefore are unreal (IV. 49-52).
4. In this way the external entities (appearances) are not the products of Consciousness; neither is Consciousness a product of external entities. Thus, the knowers confirm the non-existence of cause and effect (IV. 54). Consciousness is, thus, objectless and eternally without relations (IV. 72).
5. As in dream Consciousness vibrates as though having dual functions, so in the waking state Consciousness vibrates as though with two facets as subject and object (IV. 61, 62).

The firebrand, thus, in its vibrant condition illustrates how qualitative, quantitative, and relational appearances occur when Consciousness is in motion. However, the illustration does not answer as to what accounts for Consciousness to be in motion, to which the following answer is given:

The Hypothesis of Maya

Even as objects appear to be real by magic, so do objects appear to be real through *Maya* (IV. 58, 59).

1. In the same manner that magic is not an object that exists; Maya also is not an object that exists (IV. 58, 59).
2. As a creature conjured up by magic (Yatha mayamayo jeevo) undergoes birth and death, so also do all creatures appear and disappear (IV. 69).
3. The birthless Self becomes differentiated verily through Maya, and it does so in no other way than this. For should It become multiple in reality, the immortal will undergo mortality (III. 19). That is, the contradiction of “immortal is mortal” (A≠A) occurs.
4. The imagination that a plurality of objects exists is the Maya (delusion) of the Self by which it itself is deluded (II. 19).

[203] The word ‘Consciousness’ with capital ‘C’ here refers to Brahman, the Absolute Reality.

5. Maya is not a reality in the sense that it exists separately of Brahman, but is only descriptive of the condition of self-delusion that Brahman experiences (IV. 58). If Maya were existent then non-duality would be false since the second is already imagined. If it were non-existent then the experience of duality could not be explained. Consequently, neither existence nor non-existence can be predicated of it. Attempts to call it as existent produces the error similar to calling delusion as a power that exists in the condition "the man is deluded." Accordingly, the phrase "by the power of Its own Maya" (II. 12) may be re-phrased as "by self-delusion".

Thus, vibration of Consciousness gives rise to the experience of diversity, which is *Maya* or delusion. In other words, the whole condition of vibration and phenomenal experience is *Maya*. The implications are clear: if the Self or Brahman can be self-deluded then It cannot be perfect. As O. N. Krishnan says, "If He is subject to delusion, then He cannot be considered omniscient and omnipotent."[204] However, omniscience and omnipotence are attributes that are inapplicable to the non-dual Self. Therefore, it is wrong to talk of the Self as lacking or possessing any such attributes. As Shankara puts it:

> …the Self, in Its own reality, is not an object of any other means of knowledge; for the Self is free from all adventitious attributes. Nor…does It belong to any class; because, by virtue of Its being one without a second, It is free from generic and specific attributes…. It is devoid of all action. Nor is It possessed of qualities like blueness etc., It being free from qualities. Therefore It baffles all verbal description.[205]

Another point which O. N. Krishnan makes against the *Maya* theory is that since Brahman by being deluded is the source of all evil in the world, while at the same time the law of *Karma* operates to administer justice in the world, how can it be logically conceived that the same deluded Brahman is the source of evils and injustices and at the same time dispenser of justice?[206] To which it may be replied that both *Karma* and rebirth are unreal from the standpoint of Ultimate Reality. In other words, they appear to be so only by *Maya*; as Gaudapada says: "Birth of a thing that (already) exists can reasonably be possible only through Maya and not in reality."[207] Ultimately, if all is non-dual, what is that causes evil to what and what is that judges what? Further, being free of relational attributes such as "justice," "goodness," etc. do not apply to Brahman.

The process of *Maya* is described by the Karika as follows:[208]

---

[204] O. N. Krishnan, *In Search of Reality*, p. 343
[205] *Mandukya Upanisad*, p. 32
[206] O. N. Krishnan, *In Search of Reality*, p. 343
[207] III. 27, *Mandukya Upanisad*, p. 134
[208] II. 16-19, *Mandukya Upanisad*, pp. 74-77

1. First the Lord (Brahman) imagines the individual (soul).
2. Then He imagines the different objects, external and mental.
3. The individual gets his memory in accordance with the kind of thought-impressions he has.
4. The Self is, consequently, imagined to be the many.
5. This is the Maya of that self-effulgent One, by which He Himself is deluded.

Regarding the relation of the individual souls with the Absolute Brahman, the following explanation drawn from an analogy of jars and space is given:

The Analogy of Jars and Space (III. 3-8)

1. Just as space confined within the jars etc. merge completely on the disintegration of he jars etc., so do the individual souls merge here in the Self (III. 4).
2. Just as all the spaces confined within the various jars are not darkened when one of the spaces thus confined becomes contaminated by dust, smoke, etc., so also is the case with all the individuals in the matter of being affected by happiness etc. (III. 6).
3. As the space within a jar is neither a transformation nor a part of space (as such), so an individual being is never a transformation nor a part of the supreme Self (III. 7).
4. Just as the sky becomes blackened by dust etc. to the ignorant, so also the Self becomes tarnished by impurities to the unwise (III. 8).
5. The aggregates (of bodies and senses) are all projected like dream by the Maya of the Self (atma-maya-visarjitah, i.e., Self's deluded-projection). Be it a question of superiority or equality of all, there is no logical ground to prove their existence (III. 10).

In accordance with (3) above, it is erroneous to suppose that an individual being is a transformation of the Self. For if that was true, then when an individual realized Brahman, cosmic liberation would have simultaneously occurred. Similarly, it is erroneous to suppose that the individual is a part of the Brahman, as if Brahman were a divisible whole. For if Brahman were divisible, then in accordance to the argument from disintegration it would not be eternal. However, if it were not eternal, then it could not be, in accordance to the argument from coming-into-being. Thus, Brahman is the eternal, unchanging, formless, partless, birthless, sleepless, dreamless, tranquil and fearless, non-dual Self (III. 36, 37).

Critique of Non-Dualism and the Theory of Maya

The rational mirror has been clean over *advaita*. Consequently, the five characteristics of rationality, *viz.* unity, necessity, immutability, transcendence, and strict universality are readily reflected in the concept of Brahman. Brahman is non-dual (unity), Real (necessity), unchangeable

and birthless (immutability), non-phenomenal (transcendence), and all-pervasive[209] (strict universality).

Obviously, the non-dualistic enterprise, though thoroughly rational, is not freed from a *kind of fideism*. This is so in the sense that the non-dualistic enterprise itself begins from the hypothesis that all reality is one, Being is one. Logically, then, when the cosmological argument is applied to it, this Being turns out to be the uncaused one. The argument from necessity and contingency necessitates Being to be necessary. Similarly, other arguments prove that this Being is immutable, undividable, and infinite. Thus, the hypothesis that all Being is one facilitates reason towards this conclusion of non-dualism. However, it is also inevitable that reason assumes this worldly reality to be the only reality and, thus all being to be one. On what basis, could it assume some other kind of existence to which these rational attributes could be applied? Experience, of course, doesn't provide it with any such ideas. And, apart from Revelation, reason is certainly driven upon this hypothesis, *viz.*, that this worldly reality is all reality available for analysis, towards non-dualism. But immediately the problem to explain away phenomenal reality, the plural and dynamic one, as false emerges and non-dualists come up with the hypothesis of *Maya* to ward off this problem.

However, the theory of *Maya* does bear some difficulties. If *Maya* is nothing other than the deluded condition of the Self then, as to how Consciousness gets vibrant is not explained. If *Maya* is intrinsic to the nature of the Self, then the Self cannot be attributeless; further, since delusive power is intrinsic to It, truth can never be a sure possibility. Besides, since the individuals are neither transformations nor parts of the Self, the Self is untouched by what happens to the individuals, which are but dream-like from the absolute standpoint. Then, how can it be said that the delusion occurs to the Self if bondage or liberation of the individual does not affect It in anyway?

Moreover, the vibration of *Maya* theory does not make it clear how and why self-delusion results in plurality of appearances. Dream objects though unreal have similarity with objects of the waking state, thus admittedly arisen from the experience of the waking state (IV. 37). But objects of the waking state cannot be so related to the other states of consciousness. For in both *Prajna* and *Turiya* these objects cease to be. In the analogy of the rope and snake, wherein the rope is falsely perceived as a snake in the dark, past experience with snake may account for the illusion; however, in the experience of plurality how can non-duality account for the same?

Furthermore, the Karika's assertion that *Maya* has no reality (IV.58) does pose problem. For if *Maya* has no reality then how can it have a delusive influence over the Self? But then, on the other hand, non-dualism does have a problem in its opposite, for if *Maya* did have any reality then, non-dualism would cease in face of the dualism of Self and *Maya*. To avoid this

[209] Karika I. 10, *Mandukya Upanisad,* p. 40

contradiction, *Maya* is said to be non-existing,[210] which only means that it does not exist. In that case, the rational conclusion must be that it, as being nothing, can affect nothing on the Self. It cannot even be said that 'self-delusion' is non-existent and still mean that *Maya* is operative. Obviously, reason has come to a standpoint, even in *Advaita* philosophy where it fails to reconcile reason and experience. Thus, the question of what accounts for phenomenal experience is not satisfactorily answered. And so, it may be said that though the rationalist attempt had been successful in deducing the non-duality, transcendence, immutability, necessity, and infinity of the Absolute, it has not been successful in providing a theory that accounts for the experience of plurality in the universe. Thus, the rationalist attempt fails to harmonize itself with experience.

In both the Grecian and the *advaitin* search, it has been observed that the resultant theology has been a reflection of the characteristics of reason. The culmination of the rational search has been monism or non-dualism. The result was inevitable from the deductions reached in the reasoning process. Proceeding from certain assumptions and having arrived at certain conclusions by reasoning, the derivation of a monistic outlook was only a necessary outcome. The most important of the findings in the rational path to monism were:

1. The logical impossibility of something coming out of nothing. Lacking any empirical concept of something coming out of nothing, it only becomes inevitable to assume that something cannot come out of nothing. Further, something coming out of nothing in the sense of self-generation is logically absurd.
2. The logical impossibility of change, either in relation to space or time. Consequently, motion, birth, and transformation are absurd.
3. Uncertainty of phenomenal reality from analysis of the states of consciousness.
4. Infinite conceptual divisibility leads to the paradoxical deduction that objects are essentially both finite and infinite. From our point of view, they appear finite but by virtue of being infinitely divisible, they are infinite within themselves.
5. The phenomenon of disintegration is not in keeping with the rational necessity of the universe being eternal (since it cannot come out of nothing). If it is eternal, then it cannot disintegrate. Thus, the phenomenal world cannot be true.

In the final analysis, it is necessity, eternality, and immutability necessitated of reality and the conviction that all being is one and indivisible that leads to the conclusion that reality is non-dual and contiguous (universal).

The next section in this chapter studies the epistemological theory of Immanuel Kant (A.D. 1724-1804) in order to analyze his thought regarding the epistemic difficulties and problems involved in any attempt to unravel the mystery of Ultimate Reality.

[210] Karika IV. 58, *Mandukya Upanisad*, p. 205

Kantian Epistemics and Divine Reality

Immanuel Kant's (1724-1804) theory of knowledge is often referred to as the Copernican revolution in knowledge. According to Kant himself, as Copernicus hypothesized that the earth revolved around the sun rather than the sun revolving around the earth in order to solve the discrepancies in astronomy, it is also proper to hypothesize that objects conform to the faculty of intuition rather than the faculty of intuition conforming to the objects.[211] Though Kant insists that all knowledge begins with experience, he must be regarded as a rationalist and not an empiricist since he claims the mind to be actively involved in the production of ideas based on some innate ideas it already has in possession. The resultant knowledge of the world that one has is nothing but the product of the mind, which arbitrarily decides what the sensations must look like. Thus, knowledge is primarily rational (it resembles the mental structure).

Kant's *The Critique of Pure Reason* (1781) has two main divisions: the Transcendental Aesthetic, the Transcendental Logic. Transcendental Logic is further divided into Transcendental Analytic and Transcendental Dialectic. Both transcendental aesthetic and transcendental logic are the subjects of transcendental philosophy which Kant defines as the study of inherent structure of the mind, or the innate laws of thought.[212] It is a philosophy of the purely and merely speculative reason.

Kant defines 'transcendental aesthetic' as the science of all principles of *a priori* sensibility.[213] The science of transcendental aesthetic shows that there are two pure forms of sensible intuition, serving as principles of *a priori* knowledge, namely, space and time.[214] Space and time are not objective but subjective conditions for the apprehension of all things. In other words, all things are conceived as being in space and time and nothing can be conceived as being apart from them. One can conceive the gradual disintegration and vanishing of a thing in space but cannot conceive the vanishing of space itself. Thus, transcendental aesthetic shows the *a priori* existence of space and time as the pure forms of intuition. Furthermore, transcendental aesthetic cannot contain more than these two elements, namely space and time.[215] It is the *a priori* subjectivity of these forms of intuition that make possible the definite outworking of arithmetic and geometry; so that it is not necessary for one to go and experiment in all parts of the universe in order to establish the rules of geometry. The forms of intuition, *viz.* space and time, provide the framework with reference to which universally applicable geometrical rules can be drawn.

---

[211] Immanuel Kant, *The Critique of Pure Reason* (trans. Norman Kemp Smith; http://www.hkbu.edu.hk/~ppp/cpr/toc.html, 1985), p. 22
[212] Will Durant, *The Story of Philosophy*, p. 267
[213] *The Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 66
[214] *Ibid*, p. 67
[215] *Ibid*, pp. 81, 82

In his section on transcendental analytic, Kant lists twelve *a priori* categories or pure concepts of understanding in accordance to which reality is known. The understanding applies the pure concepts or categories to all influx of data and arranges them in order so as to facilitate knowledge. Consequentially, 'Thoughts without content are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind.'[216] And further on, 'The understanding can intuit nothing, the senses can think nothing. Only through their union can knowledge arise.'[217] The categories are: *of quantity*: unity, plurality, totality; *of quality:* reality, negation, limitation; *of relation*: of inherence and subsistence, of causality and dependence, of community (reciprocity between agent and patient); and *of modality*: possibility - impossibility, existence - non-existence, necessity – contingency.[218]

Kant argues that one cannot know reality as it is or a thing-in-itself; what can be known is only thing-as-it-appears-to-us. The thing-in-itself is what Kant calls *noumenal* reality; while the world as we experience it is termed *phenomenal* reality. Since reality as it is cannot be known Kantianism becomes another form of moderate epistemic agnosticism. What is known to us including the space and time that we experience is nothing but the creation of the mind in active participation with the influx of sensations that it unifies and synthesizes in accordance to the categories of thought in the framework of time and space.

Proceeding from here Kant attempts to explain the cause of metaphysical paradoxes in his section on transcendental dialectic. The metaphysical problem of psychology, cosmology, and theology arises mainly from a confusion of the categories of thought and forms of intuition with reality and the attempt to transcend the horizons of the understanding demarcated by the *a priori* forms and concepts. This misapplying of speculative reason beyond the bounds of possible experience lands one in antinomies of pure reason which are mutually contradictory ideas of metaphysics.

The antinomies are divided into classes of thesis and antithesis (see Table 2). While the thesis states one transcendental idea, the antithesis states its opposite transcendental idea which surmounts to an antinomy. The first antinomy is of space and time. The thesis is that 'the world has a beginning in time, and is also limited as regards space.' This thesis is a rationally anticipated one since a beginningless world would imply the completion of an infinite succession of moments in the past before reaching the present, which is a sheer impossibility.[219]

On the other hand, the antithesis "the world has no beginning, and no limits in space; it is infinite as both regards space and time" is also not without rational proof. For if the world had a

[216] *Ibid*, p. 93
[217] *Ibid*, p. 93
[218] *Ibid*, p. 113
[219] *The Critique of Pure Reason* (trans. Norman K. Smith), p. 397

beginning, it could only have that beginning in time, preceding which a moment of time and so on several succession of moments *ad infinitum* exist.

Table 2. Table of Kantian Antinomies [220]

Kant's Antinomies	
The First Antinomy, of Space and Time:	
THESIS The world has a beginning in time, and is also limited as regards space.	ANTI-THESIS The world has no beginning, and no limits in space; it is infinite as regards both time and space.
The Second Antinomy, of Atomism:	
THESIS Every composite substance in the world is made up of simple parts, and nothing anywhere exists save the simple or what is composed of the simple.	ANTI-THESIS No composite thing in the world is made up of simple parts, and there nowhere exists in the world anything simple.
The Third Antinomy, of Freedom:	
THESIS Causality in accordance with laws of nature is not the only causality from which the appearances of the world can one and all be derived. To explain these appearances it is necessary to assume that there is also another causality, that of freedom.	ANTI-THESIS There is no freedom; everything in the world takes place solely in accordance with laws of nature.
The Fourth Antinomy, of God:	
THESIS There belongs to the world, either as its part or as its cause, a being that is absolutely necessary.	ANTI-THESIS An absolutely necessary being nowhere exists in the world, nor does it exist outside the world as its cause.

[220] Kelly L. Ross, “Religious Value and the Antinomies of Transcendence” (http://www.friesian.com/antinom.htm)

Secondly, to treat space as a limited container would assume the existence of another space in which this container exists and so on *ad infinitum*. Therefore, space and time cannot be finite but are infinite. [221] This antinomy is solved once one realizes that both space and time have no absolute reality beyond us. Space is 'no object but only the form of possible objects, it cannot be regarded as something absolute in itself that determines the existence of things.'[222]

The thesis of the second antinomy of atomism states that 'Every composite substance in the world is made up of simple parts, and nothing anywhere exists save the simple or what is composed of the simple.'[223] If substance were not made up of simple parts then in the final analysis nothing would remain; that is to say that there would not even be any substance. For in order that the substance have definite existence, it should ultimately be made up of parts that cannot further be broken down. However, the antithesis states that 'No composite thing in the world is made up of simple parts, and there nowhere exists in the world anything simple.'[224] For the space that a substance or its so called simple parts occupies is not made up of simple constituents but of spaces, and anything that occupies space is, in concept, infinitely divisible; therefore, there nowhere exists in the world anything simple.[225] This antinomy again is the result of attributing external reality to space.

The third antinomy, of freedom, states its thesis as 'Causality in accordance with laws of nature is not the only causality from which the appearances of the world can one and all be derived. To explain these appearances it is necessary to assume that there is also another causality, that of freedom.'[226] An infinite series of cause and effect would be the alternative for a world without freedom. But an infinite series cannot land one in the present. There an uncaused factor, *viz.* freedom, must be conceded in order to explain the cosmos. However, the antithesis states that 'There is no freedom; everything in the world takes place solely in accordance with laws of nature.' For causality is anticipated as the reason behind every event in the world. It is a law of nature. And all nature is subject to this law. The only way transcendental power of freedom can be had is by being outside the cosmos. It is never permissible to attribute such power to substances in the world itself.[227]

The fourth antinomy is of God. According to the thesis, 'There belongs to the world, either as its part or as its cause, a being that is absolutely necessary.'[228] Since the phenomenal world contains a series of changes and every change is a necessary effect of a cause which itself is a necessary

[221] *Ibid*, pp. 397-398
[222] *Ibid*, pp. 399a-400a
[223] *Ibid*, p. 402
[224] *Ibid*, p. 402a
[225] *Ibid*, p. 403a
[226] *Ibid*, p. 409
[227] *Ibid*, p. 413a
[228] *Ibid*, p. 415

effect of another cause and so on, it follows that something that is absolutely necessary must exist if change exists as its consequence. And this necessary thing cannot be apart from this world but either part of it or cause of it. For it can only effect in time and not beyond time, and since time belongs to the world of sense, the phenomenal world, this absolute necessary cause belongs to the world of sense. On the other hand, the antithesis states that 'An absolutely necessary being nowhere exists in the world, nor does it exist outside the world as its cause.' This is inevitable since the concept of an uncaused cause is contrary to the dynamical law of the determination of all phenomena in time. Further, it can also not be said that the series itself is absolutely necessary and unconditioned though contingent and conditioned in its parts; for the whole cannot be necessary if its parts are contingent. However, if it were supposed that the uncaused cause was apart of the world, even then it is assumed that in causing the effect it begins to act, thus belonging to time and the sum total of phenomena, that is the world. Therefore, an absolutely necessary being nowhere exists in the world, nor does it exist outside the world as its cause. This antinomy is also caused by a confusion of the forms of intuition and the categories of thought with reality. Neither space and time nor causality and community exist absolutely external to the knower but only as subjective constituents of the mind. Any attempt to transcend the bounds of the mind leads to antinomies as specified above.

Implications for Divine Epistemics

Kant resolutely argues that the traditional arguments for the existence of God, *viz.* the ontological, the cosmological, and the physico-theological (teleological) arguments are based on false premises. They proceed from the false assumption that quantity, quality, relation, and modality are inherent in the universe and not merely subjective to the knower alone. The arguments against the arguments for the existence of God are as follows:

a. The Ontological Argument: The ontological argument of St. Anselm (1033-1109) proceeded from the assumption that God was 'that than which a greater cannot be conceived.' However, if this God did not exist then everything conceived of would be greater than the conception of God for reality is greater than an idea. Therefore, God as 'that than which a greater cannot be conceived' must of necessity exist. Rene Descartes had his own form of the ontological argument in which he argued that since God is by definition the supremely perfect being, He cannot lack existence, for that would mean that He was not a supremely perfect being; and since existence is a necessary attribute of perfection, God exists necessarily.[229]

Kant argues that though the inference from contingent existence to necessary existence is correct and unavoidable, the conditions of the understanding refuse to aid us in forming any conception

[229] "Ontological Arguments," *Standford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/ontological-arguments)

of such a being.[230] Thus, the ontological argument is correct as far as words are concerned; but when it comes to actually forming a concept of the absolute and necessary being the argument fails. Further, the argument rests on judgments alone and cannot thereby alone establish the reality of anything. In Kant's own words: 'the unconditioned necessity of judgments is not the same as an absolute necessity of things.'[231] Alluding to Descartes' analogy of the triangle[232] Kant writes that though to posit a triangle and yet reject its three angles would be self-contradictory, there is no contradiction in rejecting the triangle with its three angles together. To put it the other way, if suppose in the analytical statement, 'all bachelors are unmarried men' the subject 'bachelors' implied the predicate 'unmarried men,' it still does not conclusively prove that there really are unmarried men or bachelors in the world. The statement is just a verbal one and is not corroborated by empirical evidence. In the same manner, though the subject 'the supremely perfect being' implies the predicate 'has existence as an attribute,' yet it does not conclusively prove that there really is a supremely perfect being in accordance to the words.[233] One can reject both the subject and predicate and still commit no contradiction. In addition, all existential propositions (that declare the existence or non-existence of the subject) are synthetic and not analytic and, therefore, the rejection of the predicated would never be a contradiction:[234] 'all bachelors are unmarried men' is not the same as 'all bachelors exist.' On the other hand if existence was to be considered as an attribute of anything, it is clear that this could not be true since an attribute adds to something and thus modifies it, but to say that something *is* does not really add anything to it. 'The small word "is" adds no new predicate, but only serves to posit the predicate *in its relation* to the subject.' [235] Therefore, existence cannot be an attribute. Even grammatically, it is understood that the words 'is' and 'exists' are not adjectives but verbs.

However, even more difficult is the attribution of existence to an idea having *a priori* and not *a posteriori* status. Kant says:

> Whatever, therefore, and however much, our concept of an object may contain, we must go outside it, if we are to ascribe existence to the object. In the case of objects of the senses, this takes place through their connection with some one of our perceptions, in accordance with empirical laws. But in dealing with objects of pure thought, we have no means whatsoever of knowing their existence, since it would have to be known in a completely *a priori* manner. Our consciousness of all existence (whether immediately through perception, or mediately through inferences which connect something with perception) belongs exclusively to the unity of experience; any[alleged] existence outside this field, while not indeed such as we can declare to be

---

[230] *The Critique of Pure Reason* (trans. J. M. D. Meiklejohn; internet edition)
[231] *The Critique of Pure Reason* (trans. N. K. Smith), p. 501
[232] That as the three angles are integral to the conception of a triangle, existence is integral to the conception of perfection.
[233] "supremely perfect being" are just words and have no accompanying conception.
[234] *The Critique of Pure Reason* (trans. N. K. Smith), p. 504
[235] *Ibid*, p. 505

> absolutely impossible, is of the nature of an assumption which we can never be in a position to justify.[236]

Thus, since the idea of God as a perfect being cannot be empirically justified, it is impossible to certify whether such a perfect being exists or not in reality. Here it may seem that Kant is leaning towards empiricism, but it must be noted that he is only saying that necessity and strict universality can only be applied to that which is *a priori* and, thus, to the forms of intuition and the categories of thought alone. To extend these to anything beyond these is to go beyond justification. One can be sure that the statement ‘every cause has an effect’ is true since causality itself is a category of the mind and cannot be thought off. However, the same cannot be said of the existence God or any other being in the world. The distinction between the *a priori* constituents of the mind and the *a posteriori* world of senses once understood, the ontological argument cannot stand any longer. Thus, the ontological argument is dismissed.

b. The Cosmological Argument: As stated by Kant himself the cosmological argument runs as follows: If anything exists, an absolutely necessary being must also exist. Now I, at least, exist. Therefore, an absolutely necessary being exists.[237] Since an infinite series of contingent causal relations is impossible an uncaused, unconditioned, necessary cause must be posited as the cause of the universe. However, Kant reasons that this argument too, as the former one, attempts to prove the existence of the transcendent from the empirical, which is impossible. If God were a link or beginning of the series then He could not be separated from it and thus also conditioned by causality. However, on the other hand if it were argued that He is separate from the series, there remains no way reason can find to span the gap between pure and contingent existence.[238] Nothing beyond the world of senses can be definitely known to us. This argument is epistemically flawed since it misapplies the transcendental principle of causality beyond the bounds of the phenomenal world. In Kant’s own words:

> This principle is applicable only in the sensible world; outside that world it has no meaning whatsoever. For the mere intellectual concept of the contingent cannot give rise to any synthetic proposition, such as that of causality. The principle of causality has no meaning and no criterion for its application save only in the sensible world. But in the cosmological proof it is precisely in order to enable us to advance beyond the sensible world that it is employed.[239]

The chief error of both the ontological and the cosmological arguments is that of projecting the subjective transcendental principles on to reality. Thus, infinity and causality are misconstrued as physical or external conditions of reality while in reality they are concepts of the mind by means

[236] *Ibid,* p. 506
[237] *Ibid,* p. 508
[238] *Ibid,* p. 519
[239] *Ibid,* p. 511

of which objective reality is subjectively apprehended. Moreover, one cannot attribute necessity to anything in the phenomenal world, as the cosmological argument does in its inference of the necessity of an uncaused cause, since necessity is a formal condition of thought found in our reason and not applicable to external reality. In the words of Kant, 'The concept of necessity is only to be found in our reason, as a formal condition of thought; it does not allow of being hypostatised as a material condition of existence.'[240]

c. The Teleological Argument: This is the argument that infers the existence of God from the order and purposiveness apparent in the universe. Kant, however, objects to this by saying that the utmost this argument can do is show that there must be a great architect who designed this universe.[241] Whether this architect is the supreme uncaused cause of the universe can only be established by recourse to the cosmological argument which has already been shown to be methodically flawed. The cosmological argument in turn rests on the ontological proof which itself proceeds from the error of mistaking a synthetic judgment for an analytical one as has already been shown. Thus, Kant nullifies all the three classical arguments for the existence of God. The conclusion is that God cannot be known by means of reason alone; neither can He be known on the basis of experience. Consequently, natural theology is not epistemically valid. Thus, speculative reason fails to prove or even disprove the existence of God. It has no means to relate to that concept.

However, though one cannot prove the existence of God, one can at least by means of practical reason and the knowledge of moral obligation postulate the existence of God as 'the grounds for the necessary connection between virtue and happiness.'[242] On the basis of an *a priori* knowledge of what is, *viz.* the existence of moral laws, one can proceed on to know *a priori* what ought to be, *viz.* the existence of a supreme being 'as the condition of the possibility of *their* obligatory power.'[243] This postulation, however, is by use of not theoretical reason related to what is but by use of practical reason related to what ought to be; for if there were no being behind the moral laws, the moral laws would lack any obligatory power. However, there is still no way in which one can theoretically see the connection between the phenomenal world as is known and the transcendent Supreme Being God. Consequently, moral theology's flawless ideal of God as postulated by practical reason needs the aid of transcendental theology dealing with transcendental ideas to know transcendent divine reality. In Kant's own words:

> If, then, there should be a moral theology that can make good this deficiency, transcendental theology, which before was problematic only, will prove itself indispensable in determining the concept of this supreme being and in constantly testing reason, which is so often deceived by sensibility, and which is frequently out of

[240] *Ibid,* p. 518
[241] *Ibid,* p. 522
[242] Samuel Enoch Stumpf, *Socrates to Sartre* (New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1988), p. 319
[243] *The Critique of Pure Reason* (trans. N.K. Smith), pp. 526-527

> harmony with its own ideas. Necessity, infinity, unity, existence outside the world (and not as world-soul), eternity as free from conditions of time, omnipresence as free from conditions of space, omnipotence, etc. are purely transcendental predicates, and for this reason the purified concepts of them, which every theology finds so indispensable, are only to be obtained from transcendental theology.[244]

However, there is no way these transcendent predicates can be proved to be the attributes of God. Evidently, reason is imprisoned in its own forms and concepts and has no way to go beyond itself to know anything about the external world except its own analysis of the sensations. This can, inevitably, lead to some kind of solipsism. Kant was at least sure that the self as the transcendental unity of apperception ('I think') exists and is that which perceives, recollects, retains, and knows. He was also assured about the objective reality of the noumenal world as the source of the sensations that the mind decodes by means of its own concepts thus giving rise to phenomena. However, since whatever is known is conditioned by the categories of the mind, a transcendental knowledge of the divine by means of these conditional categories becomes impossible. None of the classical arguments succeed in proving the existence of God since they involve a leap from the concepts of contingency to necessity and causality to non-causality without any intermediary concept to bridge the gap between any of them. This is anything but being rational.

Critique of Kant

The distinction between *a priori* and *a posteriori* knowledge that between analytical and synthetic judgments once established, Kant easily proceeded to show that the quality of *a priori* did not just belong to analytical judgments but to some synthetic judgments too. Since these synthetic judgments like '2+2=4', 'Every effect has a cause', and 'Bodies occupy space' contained, according to Kant, predicates not contained in the subject, they meant added information; in other words the possession of knowledge *a priori*. According to Kant, then, these *a priori* data formed the conditions according to which all other empirical data were interpreted and understood by the mind. The world as one sees or perceives as a result is nothing but what the mind determines it to look as. Space and time are not objective realities but subjective forms of intuition in which all data is arranged by the mind. Thus, the mind is not able to conceive of anything apart from space and time.

But what if space is not a form of intuition but a mere negation of objects? According to this view then, space would mean nothing. Consequently, once one knows what something is, then its negation becomes readily evident. This doesn't require any *a priori* knowledge of the negation equaling a synthetic judgment. The negation, in accordance to the rational principle of the exclusive middle, is of analytical nature. Once it is known that A=A and not non-A it

[244] *Ibid*, p. 531

immediately follows that something is either A or non-A. In the same manner, once through experience something is known, its negation, namely, nothing also is known.

It can, consequently, be postulated that space is the negation of substance, of reality, of being; thus, space is nothing, unreality, non-being. Consequently, one does not see things *in* space but things alone and their negation, *viz.*, space. Things do not *occupy* space. For then, what does space *occupy*? Things *negate* space, i.e. nothing. Thus, infinity may be predicated of space in the same manner that infinity is predicated of zero. Once this is established, the question whether the universe is finite or infinite becomes unnecessary; for it is empirically evident that it cannot be materially infinite though it may be spatially infinite. But to say space is infinite is not making a positive assertion of some existent thing but stating a negation. It simply means that things negate space and where there is no thing seen, there is nothing (i.e. space) seen. And nothing (zero) is intensively (by divisibility) and extensively (by multiplicity) infinite. Thus, space can be infinitely divided and multiplied; yet, it amounts to nothing for it is nothing.

In this manner, space ceases to be a subjective condition of perception. It is simply the apprehension of non-reality.

Thus, it may be argued that none of the forms or categories that Kant alludes to is *a priori*. Though one may not perceive reality as it is, being restricted to his senses, one can definitely know much of reality by use of reason. It may also be argued that the categories that Kant labels as *a priori* are in fact categories gained and generalized by reason to assist its deductive faculty. For instance, once one learns that smoke follows fire, the concept of smoke is integrally linked with fire thenceforth, until encountered by something contrary to that generalization. In the same manner, once one experiences an object in space-time, the concept of object is integrally linked with space-time, until encountered by something contrary to that generalization. It is no wonder that people have been able to write about two-dimensional space, *Flatland,*[245] and timeless eternity. The same may be said of causality also.

However, Kant's contention that the ontological and the cosmological arguments attempt a leap from contingency to necessity cannot be disregarded. Still, Kant doesn't let go off the hope that with the help of moral theology, transcendental theology will be able to someway establish the existence of God as a necessary, absolute, perfect, transcendent, and infinite being. The question is, if experience doesn't permit us to predicate such transcendental attributes to any phenomenally experienced object, on what basis does rational theology attribute the same to God? Evidently, as had been already stated earlier, reason in its attempt to find a ground for the whole phenomena tends to find it in some existence that transcends this phenomenal world. However, since it attempts to establish the science of this divine reality on the basis of reason

---

[245] Edwin Abbott, "Flatland," *The Experience of Philosophy*, 2nd edn. (eds. Daniel Kolak & Raymond Martin; Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1992), p. 46ff

alone, it is left with nothing but itself alone in the search. Further, it finds that though the world is contingent, reason itself cannot be contingent but possesses the attributes of unity, necessity, universality, immutability, and transcendence without which it cannot find certainty of knowledge or know the truth. Now, reason doesn't mean a man or a woman who may reason fallaciously. Reason, here means the faculty of rational beings that is both the judge and law of all truth. In other words, it is by use of reason that one comes to know truth from error; and to use reason means nothing but to infer on the basis of the laws of reasoning. But inference is only possible when provided with data from experience. However, in reasoning towards ultimate reality, one is faced with the problems of plurality, contingency, finitude, change, and immanence. And since the rational criterion disallows the finality of anything of such nature, so unity, necessity, infinity, immutability, and transcendence are attributed to divine reality with the consequence that one is not sure what this being with such qualities looks like. One may reason that such attributes belong to God, but one cannot conceive of anyone possessing such attributes. Such attributes frustrate human imagination. On the other hand, as Kant rightly stated, there was no means by which to bridge the gap between this transcendental conception and the phenomenal world. No wonder then, that rationalism in both ancient Greece and India had tended towards monism and non-dualism in their attempt to fuse the transcendent with the immanent. Thus, the plurality and contingency of the universe was replaced with the unity or non-duality and the necessity of the same.

In conclusion, Kant well understood that the attempt to know God is severely handicapped by the limitations of data. His theory of forms and concepts does evoke some objections. However, his understanding of the failure of reason in bridging the gap between its notion of a necessary being and a contingent world is important. It has also been seen that the attributes that reason predicates of divine reality in monism, non-dualism, or any rational theology reflect the very qualities recognized as fundamental to something being called rational or true. It has, therefore, been said that the predication or projection of the transcendental attributes on to ultimate reality is nothing but a way in which reason attempts to establish the fundamental and ultimate nature of reality on the basis of rational principles. However, this immediately creates a gap between ultimate reality and phenomenal reality. The relation is unexplainable.

In light of this discovery, one can clearly see why the monists and non-dualists attempted to fuse the concept of a transcendental reality with that of phenomenal reality. Either the phenomenal reality is true or the transcendental reality is true. Since the phenomenal reality cannot be true being subject to change, transcendental reality alone must be true. On the other hand, there exists the certainty of only one thing: the self ('I think, therefore I am'). Consequently, reason reaches its final position when it fuses the concept of transcendence and immanence into a non-dual self as the substratum to all illusory phenomenal experience.

This fusion is expected as it also solves the problem of estrangement or alienation. Estrangement is the experience of existential frustration that man goes through on the failure of reason to find

an absolute basis for his existence or its failure to bridge the gap between the transcendent and his own phenomenal experience. It produces the feeling of existential alienation, of being cut off from reality itself,[246] and the loss of hope. Since a transcendent beyond can neither be proved nor disproved, the only one possibility remaining is to reject the 'subject and predicate alike,' to use Kant's own terms, of phenomenal experience and build up a theory that in some manner establishes the unity, eternality and necessity of being. This is what non-dualism exactly does: it fuses the concept of the transcendent with the immanent in supportive-framework--theory of *Maya*, which though maintaining the lesser reality of the phenomenal world contends for a reality that transcends the concept of phenomena. Thus, the path of pure reason can be seen to have led to monism and non-dualism.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it may be said that though reason is a useful instrument in knowing several things, its use is handicapped in the absence of any empirical data. However, its quest for absolute certainty cannot be disregarded. It seeks to know truth as exclusive, absolute, immutable, and final. Such a quest becomes appropriate when considering truth regarding things. However, when this quest is directed towards knowing the ultimate absolute or final truth of reality, reason is left with nothing but itself and its standard of measurement. Norman Geisler gives three reasons for the inadequacy of reason for divine knowledge. First, logic is only a negative test for truth. It can eliminate what is false but cannot in and of itself establish what must be true.[247] In other words, reason is empty of real knowledge, i.e. knowledge of reality. Thus, it needs empirical data to deal with but cannot by itself without help of experience know the things. Second, there are no rationally inescapable arguments for the existence of God (the monotheistic God not the monist one) because it is always logically possible that nothing ever existed including God.[248] However, unlike Geisler, it has been seen that the undeniability of Being itself despite the deniability of everything else leads to monism and non-dualism. Geisler's third problem with rational epistemics is a strong one. He argues that there is no rationally inescapable way of establishing the first principles of reasoning.[249] In other words, if all knowledge must be based on and certified by reason to be true, what is it that certifies reason? Geisler concludes that rationalism 'is without a necessary rational basis of its own.'[250]

Kant's epistemology shows that there is no way in which one can bridge the chasm between the idea of a transcendent God and the phenomenal world. Even in the ontological argument, there is no way to show how the idea of God and the argument itself could necessitate the existence of

[246] Especially when phenomena is perceived as ephemeral and transitory, it loses to one the status of reality itself, which reason expects to concur with the ideal of the truth and thus be immutable and eternal.
[247] Norman Geisler, *Christian Apologetics*, p. 45
[248] *Ibid*, p. 45
[249] *Ibid*, p. 45
[250] *Ibid*, p. 45

God. The rational argument was just rational and could not necessitate the existence of anything by virtue of it. Rational arguments can at the most prove only logical necessity but never ontological necessity. Thus, the rational quest was left with a great chasm between rational possibility and empirical reality. No wonder then, this quest has been seen in the past to have led, in the absence of any empirical evidence regarding the existence of an absolute[251] to monism and non-dualism, wherein one finds a fusion of the transcendent with immanent reality to the extent of the rejection of the phenomenal world as false. However, since the epistemic procedure involved the use of reason without and at the expense of empirical data, or the devaluation of it, reason left with nothing but itself cannot be expected to provide any information about external reality, far long the knowledge of God. In contrast to pantheism, which stresses the immanence of God, monism and non-dualism, being true to their rationalistic ideal, stress on transcendence, as that nature of God by which he is different and above the *phenomenal* world. The real world is not plural as phenomenon shows but non-dual. In advaita philosophy, the self as the subjective part in the noetic process is postulated as the only reality. This is an inescapable conclusion seeing that the only thing reason seems to be sure of is of the thinking self (the ‘I think, therefore I am’).

Thus, reason alone and by itself cannot be considered to be a reliable guide to the knowledge of God. It has been seen that pure rational epistemics leads to monism and non-dualism, which are counter-empirical philosophies and reflections of the reason itself. Consequently, it may be concluded that reason cleft from experience cannot be a perfectly reliable guide to the knowledge of divine reality.

[251] The fact is that even if this absolute being or thing appeared in someway to anyone, reason could right away deny absoluteness to it on the grounds that by being thus limited to form (in which it appears) and conditions (space-time) it could not be absolute, infinite, and eternal.

Chapter 3

EMPIRICAL EPISTEMICS OF DIVINE REALITY

This chapter aims to prove that the ultimate consequence of any empirical epistemics of divine reality is naturalism or finite supernaturalism as evident from animism, polytheism, pantheism, and panentheism. This is so because the empiricality of reality implies plurality, contingency, dynamism or change, immanence, and finitude, as will be proved in this chapter, and therefore in order to make an empirical sense out of reality, experience rejects all transcendentality as meaningless. This is well evident from a study of Empirical Skepticism and Logical Positivism.

'Empirical epistemics of divine reality' may be defined as the study of the epistemic procedures of metaphysical theories on divine reality that proceed from experience as their chief source of knowledge. Empiricism is the position that knowledge has its origins in and derives all of its content from experience.[252] Thus, empirical epistemic theology basically relies on experience for all data pertaining to divine reality.

The method of arguing from specific instances of experience to a general concept regarding something related with the instances is known as induction. The scientific method has ultimately been inductive, the generalized results of which constitute general propositions from which specific inferences are drawn or deductions made. However, knowledge gained by induction cannot be considered to be necessary and universal, though it may presently appear so to be.[253] One can, at the most, only say that any generalization based on experience is highly probable, not absolute.[254] Thus, it is not uncommon for scientific theories to change or be modified with newer experiences and discoveries.

Although, in modern times, it was the British empiricists, namely, John Locke (1632-1704), George Berkeley (1685-1753), and David Hume (1711-1776) who vociferously attacked the claims of rationalism to knowledge, the history of empiricism has been very long and can be traced to the writings of Aristotle (384-322 B.C.), Saint Thomas Aquinas (1224-1274), Sir Francis Bacon (1561-1626), and Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679). The emphasis on empirical knowledge above traditional testimony and reason can be found also in the writings of the Indian materialists. For the Charvaka, direct perception (*pratyaksha*) was the only means of valid knowledge. All the other pramanas including inference (*anumana*) were rejected on the grounds that one can never come to any generalization of things since there is a host of data beyond one's immediate purview and, thus, one doesn't stand qualified to make universal judgments.[255] A generalization may be valid so far as investigated cases are concerned; however, this does not guarantee the same will not be falsified by a single case that has not yet been investigated or is beyond the space-time arena of the investigator presently. The materialist would argue that this

---

[252] Velasquez, *Philosophy*, p. 557

[253] Shyam Kishore Seth & Neelima Mishra, *Gyan Darshan (Philosophy of Knowledge)* (Allahabad: Lokbharati Prakashan, 2000), p. 218

[254] *Ibid*, pp. 218-219

[255] Hiriyanna, *Indian Philosophy*, p. 189

probability of falsification and conjoined suspicion is sufficient enough to nullify the absolute viability of any generalized proposition.[256]

The consequence of such an epistemic position is that Charvaka philosophy neither believes in a God who controls the universe nor a conscience which guides man.[257] It also doesn't believe in the spiritual dimension of the human (the soul) and in a life beyond death. Thus, this world and this life is all that one has at the present, the enjoyment of which constitutes the ultimate ideal.

However, atheistic materialism may not be said to be the only result of empirical epistemics. This chapter argues that animism, polytheism, pantheism, and panentheism are all an outcome of an empirical approach to the knowledge of ultimate or divine reality.

To begin with, the chapter will discuss themes related to the nature, scope, and reliability of empirical knowledge, in relation to reality or ultimate reality. Next, will be discussed whether true knowledge of God can be conclusively established on empirical grounds. To achieve this, the epistemic procedure of the following theological theories, namely, animism, polytheism, pantheism, panentheism, and the non-theological theories of skepticism, logical positivism, pragmatism, and mysticism will be studied, so as to establish the reliability or unreliability and the sufficiency or insufficiency of experience for doing theology apart from reason and revelation.

Experience, Knowledge, and Reality

According to empiricism, all knowledge about the world comes from or is based on the senses. *A priori* knowledge doesn't exist. True knowledge is *a posteriori* and thus, depends on experience. True knowledge is knowledge stated in empirically verifiable statements.[258] There are various forms of empiricism, chief of which are sensationalism of the British empiricists, radical empiricism of William James, and logical empiricism of A. J. Ayer. According to sensationalism, all knowledge is limited to sensations gathered by the organs of sense. Nothing beyond the reach of the senses can be known. All knowledge is limited to sense-perception. According to radical empiricism, experience includes not just sensations but all kinds of feelings, perceptions, and emotions. The third form of empiricism, *viz.* logical empiricism (logical positivism) emphasizes on the analysis of experience itself and invalidates every proposition that

[256] *Ibid*, p. 189
[257] *Ibid*, p. 193
[258] Velasquez, *Philosophy*, p. 294

is not empirically verifiable.[259] In its extreme form, empiricism concludes that not only does all knowledge begin with experience but that it also cannot know anything beyond experience.[260]

Common Tenets of Empiricism

The common tenets of empiricism may be stated as follows:[261]

1. The mind is passive. According to Locke, the mind is a blank slate (Tabula Rasa) on which experience inscribes impressions. The mind only becomes active when it comes to possess some simple ideas (like gold and mountain) from which complex ideas (like a golden mountain) can be imagined.[262] Thus, 'These simple ideas, when offered to the mind, the understanding can no more refuse to have, nor alter when they are imprinted, nor blot them out and make new ones itself, than a mirror can refuse, alter or obliterate the images or ideas which the objects set before it do therein produce.'[263]
2. Sensation and reflection are the two sources of ideas. Sensation is the source of all those ideas like yellow, white, heat, cold, etc. which possess sensible qualities and are first conveyed to the mind through the senses to the mind where impressions of them are produced giving rise to the ideas of sensation. Reflection or internal sense is the source of all those ideas like perception, thinking, doubting, believing, and reasoning, which could not be had from things without.[264]
3. There are no innate ideas. This follows from the above. Ideas are not pre-fixated in the mind. The mind is a blank slate at birth. There are no synthetic a priori ideas. All knowledge is synthetic a posteriori. Thus, according to Locke, 'There is nothing in the intellect which was not first in the senses,'[265] and according to Hume there are 'No ideas without impressions.'[266]
4. The significance of induction. Empiricism emphasizes the inductive process of reasoning. Knowledge, thus, proceeds from the specific or particular to the general. According to Locke, the senses at first let in particular ideas, and furnish the yet empty cabinet, and the mind by degrees growing familiar with some of them, they are lodged in the memory, and given names. Later, proceeding further, the mind abstracts the ideas, and by degrees learns the use of general names. Eventually, the mind comes to be furnished with ideas

[259] Hridaynarayan Mishra, *Paschatya Darshan Ki Samasyaye (Gyan Mimamsa Evam Tatva Mimamsa)* (Allahabad: Shekhar Prakashan, 2003), p. 56
[260] "Empiricism," *Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia* (Microsoft Corporation, 2001)
[261] Hridaynarayan Mishra, *Paschatya Darshan,* pp. 56-58
[262] John Hospers, *An Introduction to Philosophical Analysis,* p. 103
[263] John Locke, "Knowledge is Ultimately Sensed," *Classic Philosophical Questions,* 7th edn. (ed. James A. Gould; New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1992), p. 234
[264] *Ibid,* pp. 233-234
[265] Hridaynarayan Mishra, *Paschatya Darshan,* p. 57
[266] John Hospers, *Introduction to Philosophical Analysis,* p. 103

and language, the materials about which to exercise its discursive faculty and the use of reason becomes gradually more obvious with increasing influx of data.[267]

5. Knowledge is formed from simple and complex ideas. According to Locke, the ideas are at first simple and separate from each other. By means of subtraction and addition, the mind forms complex ideas out of the simple ideas. For example, 'red rose' is a complex idea formed from different and separately received simple ideas like 'red,' 'smell,' 'tenderness,' etc.
6. Empiricism considers the physical sciences as exemplifying knowledge. Even though the knowledge gained from experience is only probable and doesn't possess the characteristic of strict universality or necessity, yet such knowledge is substantial and factual. Therefore, only empirical knowledge as exemplified in the physical sciences is acceptable.
7. Experience validates knowledge. Ultimately, it is experience that either proves or disproves knowledge. Experience is the only final evidence of truth. Thus, truth is nothing but correspondence with reality.

Thus, empiricism limits all knowledge to sensation and reflection. According to Locke, reason is not a source of knowledge. In fact, it is 'nothing else but the faculty of deducing unknown truths from principles of propositions that are already known.'[268] He goes on to argue that anything that needs reason to discover cannot be thought innate, for if it were innate it would already been known. Consequently, nothing devoid of empirical evidence or support is acceptable.

A counter-question to this view would be: How much evidence is necessary for any proposition to be acceptable? Obviously, empirical evidences no matter how many they are still face the possibility of being falsified by one little opposite fact. In that sense, how can one be absolutely sure that 2+2=4? Are such mathematical 'truths' to be established on the basis of reason or experience? How can one be empirically sure that 2+2 *necessarily entails* 4? Aren't such necessary relations only possible on the basis of reason and not empirical evidence? To this the empiricist would answer that 2+2=4 is an analytical judgment and therefore tautological; it doesn't need evidence to prove it for the predicate is contained in the subject. However, the Kantian synthetic *a priori* is unacceptable to the empiricist who contends that such knowledge doesn't exist. Consequently, the proposition 'Every effect has a cause' is not *a priori* but synthetic *a posteriori*, and may involve association of effect and cause by habit and not necessity; by implication, cause and effect are not necessarily related as Kant argued. In modern

[267] John Locke, "Knowledge is Ultimately Sensed," *Classic Philosophical Questions*, 7th edn. (ed. James A. Gould; New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1992), p. 232

[268] Gould, *Classic Philosophical Questions*, p. 230

science, the element of unpredictability and randomness introduced by quantum mechanics may be quoted as evidence for the non-necessity of causal relations.[269]

Therefore, knowledge gained by experience alone cannot be regarded to give rise to necessary truths.

Characteristics of Empirical Knowledge

The following characteristics of empirical knowledge may be delineated:

1. The concept of 'experience' immediately involves the inescapability of plurality; for it is obvious that there can be no experience unless there was a subject who perceived an object through some medium of perception. Thus, plurality becomes the first inevitable foundation of empirical knowledge.
2. Secondly, contingency is inherent to experience. Even if one had investigated that every book in a particular shelf of the library were a science book, he could not necessarily infer from it that that particular shelf was a science shelf, unless, of course, he already had a general knowledge that books in a library are arranged according to subjects, and based on such general knowledge, he finds the science books in the shelf and deduces that the shelf is a science shelf. But once it is already known that the library shelves are subject-wise arranged, one only needs to pick up one book to know whether the shelf is a science shelf or not; since, the general knowledge necessitates particular knowledge. However, in the case of induction, this is not so. If the person did not know that the library shelves were subject-wise arranged, he would not be able to absolutely conclude that the shelf is a science shelf. The person would still be left with other possibilities like the science books being kept in that particular shelf unintentionally or the library having more science books then any other books. Thus, the relation between the instances and the conclusion is not one of necessity but of probability; therefore, empirical inferences are contingent. Further, the existence of none of the elements of nature is perceived as necessary. All things appear to be contingent on something else. Therefore, reality itself, apparently, cannot be considered to be necessary but contingent. Thus, contingency is at the foundation of empirical knowledge.
3. Thirdly, the essentiality of plurality prevents the possibility of infinity. Thus, nothing in reality can be infinite, for an infinite destroys the possibility of any other existence, at least in empirical imagination. By way of illustration, if suppose one were asked to imagine an infinite ocean, how many other oceans would there be. None; for that infinite ocean would fill all space infinitely leaving space for none. But since, the world as

[269] Stephen Hawking, *A Brief History of Time* (London: Bantam Books, 1988), p. 60

known evinces pluralism and not monism, the existence of an infinite is impossible. Thus, the very fact of plurality destroys infinity and thus all reality is plural in nature. Empirical knowledge, thus, is always of the finite and never of the infinite. The only infinite known to experience is the negation of something, namely, nothing. Consequently, finitude lies at the foundation of empirical knowledge.

4. Fourthly, since all experience is not uniform, changeability lies at the foundation of empirical knowledge. The passing of time and the continuous elapsing of the present into memory evinces the mutable nature of experience. The experience of the moment becomes a memory of the past as soon as it is had. Thus, lack of uniformity indicates the mutable nature of experience. Further, experience is always dynamic in character. A static, frozen, experience is equal to no experience. Thus, dynamics is part of experience.
5. Finally, since all experience, though internal (of the subject) and external (of the universe), is limited to the world of senses (five or six as the intuitionists would contend),[270] knowledge is immanent and not transcendent. One cannot go beyond one's own empirical faculties to apprehend reality. As A. J. Ayer (1910-1989) saw it, the conception of transcendent reality can never be derived from evidence of the senses (sense-experience);[271] therefore, metaphysical concepts involving transcendence are nonsensical to empirical epistemics. Empirically speaking, reality has to be immanent.

Thus, plurality, contingency, finitude, changeability, and immanence or spatio-temporality, are chief characteristics of empirical knowledge. This is so inferred because experience occurs and can only be conceived to occur in the framework of a plural, contingent, finite, changeable, and spatio-temporal universe. If reality were not plural then there would be no subject-object distinction making experience impossible. Apparently, it is contingent and experience itself is contingent on several factors, including the sense organs functioning properly. Plurality and finitude go together, and, finally, all objects of senses are perceived as spatio-temporal. Thus, even if it were contended that there was something beyond the grasp of the human senses, it would not be possible to know it; for, nothing as such would be empirically verifiable and, therefore, acceptable. All knowledge is, therefore, immanent or spatio-temporal.

Experience, Knowledge, and Divine Reality

Having seen that plurality, contingency, finitude, changeability, and immanence or spatio-temporality, are chief characteristics of empirical knowledge and that experience itself evinces the above stated characteristics in the universe, it is expected that empirical theology or theology based on empirical epistemics will contain the same characteristics in whatever notion of divine

[270] Some heterodox schools of Indian philosophy classify intuition under experience. Cf. Hiriyanna, *Indian Philosophy*, p. 179; also John Locke in *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*: 'I have here followed the common opinion of man's having but five senses, though, perhaps, there may be justly counted more…' James A. Gould (ed.), *Classic Philosophical Questions*, 7th edn. (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1992), p. 235

[271] Velasquez, *Philosophy*, p. 245

or ultimate reality it envisages. In popular polytheism, the gods are as finite as humans, having experiences as common as humans. Even in pantheism, the divine element is not alienated from the secular but is regarded as pervading all. The preference of divine reality is not at the expense of secular reality. The divine is not transcendent but immanent to the world. Thus, plurality, contingency, finitude, changeability, and immanence are chief grounds of the empirical epistemics of divine reality; evidently, standing in contrast to the unity, necessity, infinity, immutability, and transcendence of rational epistemics.

This is also evident in the anti-theological rejection of the non-empirical, absolute, transcendent, and abstract notion of a rational divinity. If the word 'God' is defined with the characteristics appropriated by reason, then empirical anti-theology has no room for such notion. Such notion is nonsensical since it contains no empirically verifiable concept. Thus, empirical verifiability also stands at the core of the empirical epistemics of divine reality. In this section, the various theological and non-theological positions related the knowledge of divine reality will be discussed.

Theological Positions

The theological positions that will be discussed under this heading will be four, *viz.*, primal theology, polytheism, pantheism, and panentheism. It will be shown that all of these theologies are based upon the empirical method of doing theology. The source of all the empirical theologies is experience. God or the divine is more an experience than a notion to them. As a matter of fact, the divine is inseparable from the natural. The concept of immanence is so strong that even the divide between humans and animals is blurred.[272] Mythology weaves a powerful blending of the sentient and non-sentient. Animals talk and feel as humans do. Trees, rivers, rocks, mountains, the wind, the rain, the dawn, and every element of nature have something to say about the divine. Thus, nature is seen as a mirror, a voice, a tabernacle, a reflection, or as in some mythologies begotten of the divine. This section examines the epistemic route of such theologizing.

Primal Theology

Primal theology is the theology of any of the many primal religions. Thus, there is not just one primal theology but many primal theologies, though most of them have something in common between them. Also known as tribal theology, primal theology is considered to be primitive in nature and very unscientific. Animism, magic, manaism, fetishism, and magic are some of the chief ingredients of tribal theology in addition to the myths of creation and the many rituals and rites that belong to such religions. The word 'primal' along with other words like 'tribal,' 'small-scale,' 'elementary,' and 'non-technological' have been selected to ward off the negative

[272] "Native American Mythology," *Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia* (Microsoft Corporation, 2001)

connotations of the world 'primitive.'[273] Some had even used words like 'savage' to refer to the tribals in the past as if the primitive people were devoid of any civilization. A study of tribal culture, however, reveals that they do have marks of high cultural sense. The tribals, therefore, must not be considered as barbarians but as less civilized peoples.[274] There has been varying amounts of development among the tribals, mostly found in North and South America, Australia, Africa, and Asia. The Mayans of America, for instance, had a written language based on glyphs as early as the sixth century B.C.[275]

In India, the tribals constitute about 8.2% of the Indian population.[276] The fifty or more tribal groups of India are, with regards to the population size, next only to Africa.[277] A study of the religion and belief systems of the tribals reveals a deep sense of the supernatural and reverence of nature.

Primitive cultures should not be considered to have been totally devoid of scientific knowledge. According to C. A. B. Tirkey, some of the attitudes and activities of the primitive people can be described as belonging to the realms of common sense and science.[278] Though not thoroughly scientific as might be expected today, the tribal outlook was quite empirical and pro-technological; however, rudimentary in nature. While the realistic outlook of science is of representative realism according to which ideas represent and are copies of real things in knowledge but are not the same as the things themselves,[279] the primal outlook resembles more that of naïve realism according to which the external world of plurality is not only true but also perceived as it is in experience.[280] Scientific theories, on the other hand, are variously seen as instrumental, real, or conceptually coherent depending on the epistemology of science accepted.[281] However, by 'science' Tirkey more means the technological part of it and refers to it as the 'rudiments of science' found among the tribals. Their 'chipping of flint to produce a cutting edge, or the tilling of the soil to make a garden,' according to Tirkey, 'exhibits to a degree the empirical basis and elaborated technique characteristic of scientific method.'[282] Such scientific tendencies are, according to Tirkey, a result of a common sense view of the universe that is based on experience.[283]

---

273 C. A. B. Tirkey, *Religion, Primal Religions* (Delhi: ISPCK, 1998), p. 111
274 *Ibid*, p. 111
275 "Native Americans," *Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia* (Microsoft Corporation, 2001)
276 N. N. Ojha (ed.), *Chronicle India 2006: A Handy Compedium of Statistics & Who's Who* (New Delhi: Chronicle Books, 2006), p. 113
277 N. N. Ojha (ed.), *Chronicle Year Book 2006* (New Delhi: Chronicle Books, 2006), p. 128
278 C. A. B. Tirkey, *Religion, Primal Religion,* p. 113
279 Hridaynarayan Mishra, *Paschatya Darshan ki Samsyaye*, pp. 90-91
280 Cf. John Hospers, *Introduction to Philosophical Analysis,* p. 494
281 Velasquez, *Philosophy*, pp. 372-377
282 C. A. B. Tirkey, *Religion, Primal Religion,* p. 114
283 *Ibid*, p. 114

However, it would not be right to label the technology of the primitive groups as completely rudimentary. The igloo (Inuit for 'house') of the Native Americans, for instance, is considered to be quite sophisticated. Usually made of hide or sod over a wood or whalebone frame, it is a dome with a sunken entrance that traps heat indoors but allows ventilation.[284] Monoliths, dating as back as 2800 B.C., give evidence of a well developed knowledge of mathematics and geometry among the primal groups of America, Europe, and India.[285] The American Indian shamans could set broken bones and used several herbal remedies. The Inca are known to have used coca from which comes the cocaine drug. Modern doctors use the Curare arrow poison to treat hydrophobia and tetanus. The Indians also used quinine, now used to treat malaria. The Inca are known to have developed *trephining,* the removal of part of the skull to relieve pressure on the brain.[286] Obviously, the primitive tribes cannot be considered to be totally bereft of technology. Thus, the empirical and pragmatical approach is explicitly seen in tribal culture.

Following is an account of beliefs common to primal religions that evince experience as the source of theologizing among them:

i. Belief in Magic, Mana, and Supernatural Powers. 'Magic,' in primal religion, may be defined as 'any art that invokes supernatural powers' or the 'art of influencing events supernaturally.'[287] At the core of most primal religions is the belief that man can force nature to conform to his will through use of spells and ceremonies.[288] Magic and religion are not always separable.[289] This, however, is not characteristic of only primal religions. Almost every religion has some sort of 'science' which it believes can influence nature in favor of man. Ranging from chanting to performing of certain ceremonies, this magical outlook has great influence on one's religion.

Though looking quite unscientific to the modern scientific mind, the experience with magic and supernatural powers is something quite ubiquitous. The attempt to explain away these events as unscientific does not rule out the factuality of the experience itself. In the end, it is one's own personal subjective experience that highly matters in religious matters, and it is indubitably established that the belief in magic is not without empirical supplement of results. A specialist in the study of the occult, Dr. Kurt E. Koch, in his book *Between Christ and Satan,* gives record of

---

[284] "Native Americans," *Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia* (Microsoft Corporation, 2001)
[285] "Megalithic Monuments," "Native Americans," "Nagaland," *Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia* (Microsoft Corporation, 2001)
[286] "Indian, American," *The World Book Encyclopedia,* vol. 10 (Chicago: Field Enterprises Educational Corporation, 1975), p. 123
[287] Maurice Waite (ed.), *The Little Oxford Dictionary,* rev. 7th edn. (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 381
[288] C. A. B. Tirkey, *Religion, Primal Religions,* p. 114
[289] W. Lloyd Warner, *A Black Civilization: A Social Study of an Australian Tribe,* rev. edn. (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1958), p. 9

about 78 cases in which magic was involved.[290] Likewise, W. Lyod Warner, in his *A Black Civilization: A Study of an Australian* Tribe, mentions several cases of magic and medicine among the Murngin that could not be scientifically explained.[291] Even if such instances are rejected as naïve interpretations of scientifically explainable events, the fact of the universality of magic still is undeniable. According to R. R. Marette in England, H. Hubert and Marcel Mauss in France, mana was the basis of magical belief and practice.[292] In the Murngin tribe, for instance, the medicine man is supposed to derive his mana from the clan, and uses this power as sorcery and magic to destroy some enemy power.[293]

The concept of 'mana' seems to be deeply connected with the primal view of reality and even divine reality. The word 'mana' is a Melanesian word meaning 'power,' 'potence' or the like.[294] Common among the primal religions is the belief that men, spirits, and gods possess some mysterious power that enables them to accomplish unusual things. This mana is believed to be transferable to animals and objects. The *Oreada* of the American Indian, the *Kami* of the Japanese,[295] the *Chi* of the Chinese, and the *Prana* of the Hindus[296] are other words similar to mana. The islanders of Pacific Islands considered mana as an impersonal, supernatural force that flowed through objects, persons, and places. They believed that certain animals, persons, and religious objects had such high levels of mana that touching them would only incur injury; therefore, they declared all such mana-filled beings and objects as *taboo* (forbidden to touch).[297] The belief in mana is also the basis of *fetishism*, the veneration and use of objects that are believed to contain mana.[298] Manaism, then, is the belief that things are pervaded by or possess some powers that are relatively negative or positive and could either cause good or evil to others. Thus, plurality and immanence are ready characteristics of mana, which is believed to be individually found in different objects in different proportions.

There are various ways in which people have tried to explain this belief in mana. Sociologically, a description in terms of mana often appears to be a symbolic way of accounting for the authority and status of certain people in society.[299] Manaism, then, may have been a mythical (intended or inferred) construct that ensured and explained authoritative positions and relations within the tribe. Such a theory, however, does not explain why different tribes disconnected from each other are parallel in their theories of mana. Many possibilities exist: manaism may have

---

[290] Kurt E. Koch, *Masih aur Shaitan ke Beech,* Hindi translation of *Between Christ and Satan* (Faridabad: Sabina Printing Press, 1999), pp. 60-98
[291] W. Lloyd Warner, *A Black Civilization: A Social Study of an Australian Tribe,* pp.183-212
[292] "Mana," *Encyclopedia Britannica*, Vol. 14 (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc., 1968), p. 746
[293] W. Lloyd Warner, *A Black Civilization: A Social Study of an Australian Tribe,* p. 233
[294] C. A. B. Tirkey, *Religion, Primal Religions*, p. 116
[295] *Ibid*, p. 117
[296] "Chi," *Alternative Healing Dictionary* (http://www.reiki.nu/treatment/healing/dictionary/dictionary.html)
[297] "Mythology," *The World Book Encyclopedia,* vol. 13, p. 825
[298] C. A. B. Tirkey, *Religion, Primal Religions*, pp. 127, 128
[299] "Mana," *Encyclopedia Britannica*, Vol. 14, p. 746

originated among humans when they were only a single, homogenous unit or it may have spread from one tribe to another or it parallelly arose in the tribal experiences and was modified by inter-tribal connections through war, trade, marriages, etc. However, since a historical appraisal of the problem is not without difficulties, an existential analysis may be somewhat proper in this direction.

Based on Rudolf Otto's (1869-1937), *The Idea of the Holy* (1917), manaism may be seen as a belief originating from a sense of awe and dread about a mysterious something 'other' that lurks behind the face of nature. At the core of the belief in mana, then, might have been the view that all being is pervaded by mysterious powers. Eventually, these 'mysterious' powers were assumed to aid or curtail the prospects of man.

The origins of the belief in mana may be traced to the human psychology of the religious experience. According to Rudolf Otto, humans have a particular sense of awe or dread about a mysterious something, which he calls the *numinous*.[300] Otto traces the origin of primitive religions to this sense of a *mysterium tremendum*, the numinous dread or 'the dread inspired by the numinous,'[301] which in primitive people appears as daemonic dread.[302] According to Otto, this daemonic dread is nothing but a misapprehension of the numinous.[303] Out of such dread has come the belief in demons and deities. In Otto's own words:

> …Whatever has loomed upon the world of his [man's] ordinary concerns as something terrifying and baffling to the intellect; whatever among natural occurrences or events in the human, animal, or vegetable kingdoms has set him astare in wonder and astonishment – such things have ever aroused in man, and become endued with, the 'daemonic dread' and numinous feeling, so as to become 'portents', 'prodigies', and 'marvels'. Thus and only thus is it that 'the miraculous' rose.[304]

The eight phenomena of primitive religion, *viz.*, 'magic, worship of the dead, ideas regarding souls and spirits, belief that natural objects have powers that can be manipulated by spells etc, belief that natural objects like mountains and the sun and the moon are actually alive, fairy stories (and myths),'[305] are, accordingly, the earliest expressions of the human predisposition for religious experience. Thus, all such mystical assumptions developed in the early evolutionary stage of humans.

---

300 C. A. B. Tirkey, *Religion, Primal Religions*, p. 117
301 "Otto on the Numinous," (http://academic.brooklyn.cuny.edu/english/melani/gothic/numinous.html)
302 "Otto's 'Idea of the Holy': Summary," (http://www.bytrent.demon.co.uk/otto1.html)
303 "Otto on the Numinous," (http://academic.brooklyn.cuny.edu/english/melani/gothic/numinous.html)
304 Rudolf Otto, *The Idea of the Holy* (tr. John W. Harvey; New York: Galaxy Book, 1958), p. 64
305 "Otto's 'Idea of the Holy': Summary," (http://www.bytrent.demon.co.uk/otto1.html)

However, a universal belief in mana, as seen in many cultures, cannot be fully accounted by a theory that sees all such beliefs as primitive expressions of religious inclination or awe. Though it is not improbable that induction based on the sense of the numinous, parallelly led to manaism in the different cultures, the conclusion is not feasible since the reason considered supportive, *viz.* the mere sense of awe, does not *necessarily* lead to such a complicated theory of manaism as found in primitive cultures. Secondly, it is even debatable whether the history of primal religion has been of evolution or devolution: some anthropologists have suggested that tribes are not animistic because they have continued unchanged since the dawn of history; rather, evidence indicates their degeneration from a monotheistic perspective.[306] Tribal studies bear witness to such a theory.[307] Some scholars have seen in mana and allied notions not a single evolutionary stage or prior component in religious thought but a set of complex, vaguely defined metaphysical concepts expressing the view that human efficacy is not explicable in physical terms alone.[308] Accordingly, it may be assumed that the dreadful and mysterious sense of the numinous, together with some pre-understanding of the supernatural through experience in the occult (magic, witchcraft, magical ritualism, etc.) or religion, and the necessity of a cultic establishment of authority may have contributed to the development of manaism. Thus, subjective (sense of the numinous) and objective (occultic or religious) experience can be accounted as sources of manaism in primitive cultures.

Manaism, evidently, then is an empirical construct. The rational epistemics of ultimate reality would have vouched for a transcendent, prime mover, or power beyond the universe. However, in a setting where the rational concept is either rejected or unthought of, reliance on the empirical epistemic method, naturally, would yield a belief in some sort of power or powers that pervaded (was immanent to) all being and thus accounted for the evil or good of things. Consequently, the empirical characteristics of plurality (differences of mana), immanence (indwelling), and mutability (transferability) are observable in manaism.

ii. Animism and the Belief in Spirits. The word 'animism' comes from the Latin word 'anima' meaning breath or soul.[309] Sir E. B. Tylor used the term 'animism' in his book *Primitive Culture* (1871) to mean a 'belief in spirits.'[310] Animism is popularly known as the belief that all nature, including rocks and trees, is replete with spirits or spiritual beings. In some primal cultures, humans are considered to possess more than one spirit each separable from the other and yet one with the person. For example, the Dakota believed that believed that each person possessed four

306 Robert Brow, "Origins of Religion," *The World's Religions* (Oxford: Lion Publishing plc, 1992), p. 31
307 Cf. T. Hembron, *The Santals: Anthropological-Theological Reflections on Santali & Biblical Creation Traditions* (Calcutta: Punthi Pustak, 1996), pp. 34-36; and T. Nongsiej, *Khasi Cultural Theology* (Delhi: ISPCK, 2002), pp. 21-28
308 "Mana," *Encyclopedia Britannica,* Vol. 14, p. 746
309 Alan G. Hefner and Virgilio Guimaraes, "Animism" (http://www.themystica.com/mystica/articles/a/animism.htm)
310 "Animism" (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Animism)

souls: One animated the body and required food; a second watched over the body, somewhat like a guardian spirit; a third hovered around the village.[311] Communication with the spirits through mediums as a spiritualistic practice and other occultic phenomena is common among the primitives, thus establishing the empirical grounds for such belief.[312]

E. B. Tylor, Herbert Spencer, and Andrew Lang saw different phenomena that might have been the sources of animism. They are trance, unconsciousness, sickness, death, clairvoyance, dreams, apparitions of the dead, wraiths, hallucinations, echoes, shadows, and reflections.[313] Etymology and semantics demonstrate the plausibility of the notion that the belief in spirits might have originated out of an observation of phenomena as listed above. For instance, the Basutus regard the life of man as linked to his shadow. Similarly, in America and classical Europe, the soul was considered to be identical with the shadow of a person.[314] The Greek word *pneuma* and the Hebrew word *ruach,* used to mean spirit or soul, carry the meanings of 'breath,' or 'air'. Thus, the phrases 'yield his last breath' and 'give up the ghost' in the Semitic and Indian languages means 'to die'. Likewise, sickness is often referred to as the feebleness or weakness of the spirit. Phrases such as 'spirit got tired,' 'spirit was gone from his face,' 'spirit became weak,' express the sickening phenomena. Dreams, in animist cultures, are considered to be spiritual events experienced by the spirit of the person in sleep. Occultic experiences might have provided additional grounds for the belief in the spirit-world. The possibility of deception by evil spirits, as maintained by some, or the chimerical play of imagination also cannot be rejected. Several cases of OBEs (Out of Body Experiences), spiritualistic séances, near-death experiences and the like have been reported attesting the fact that some sort of extra-sensory experience is possible to man; thus, evincing possibilities of empirical animism. The subjective and unverifiable nature of such experiences, however, invites more doubt than belief, philosophically speaking.[315] Yet, the overwhelming evidences supporting such experiences cannot be callously denounced. In his article, "The Concept of Survival of Bodily Death and the Development of Parapsychology(1),"[316] Carlos S. Alvarado gives an elaborate account of psychical research and evidences of spirits indwelling bodies and surviving the death. One significant event of popularity was the spiritualistic séances of Bishop Pike with, allegedly, the spirit of his dead son.[317] Bishop Pike, eventually, abandoned his clerical office to pursue a study of the spirit-realm. As early as 1906, it was noticed that the body of evidence regarding psychical events being accumulated was so massive and strong that it could no longer be easily rejected.[318]

[311] "Tribal Religions" (http://www.unexplainedstuff.com/Afterlife-Mysteries/Tribal-Religions.html)
[312] Alan G. Hefner and Virgilio Guimaraes, "Animism"
[313] "Animism" (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Animism)
[314] "Animism" (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Animism)
[315] "Evidence of Survival" (http://www.philosophyonline.co.uk/pages/life.htm)
[316] Originally published in the *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research*, Volume 67.2, Number 871, April 2003; as presented on website: http://www.survivalafterdeath.org/articles/alvarado/concept.htm
[317] Merrill F. Unger, *The Haunting of Bishop Pike* (Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, 1971).
[318] J. Brierley, *Religion and Experience* (New York: Thomas Whittaker, 1906), pp. 92-99

Especially, when such evidence comes from scientifically oriented people, the denial of it becomes even more difficult. For instance, in his book *Caught Up into Paradise,*[319] Dr. Richard E. Eby, an obstetrician and gynecologist, relates his experience with death and after life. The American Society of Psychical Research (ASPR; founded in 1885)[320] has documented several cases of psychical experiences, analyzing them and investigating in order to explain such psychical phenomena. According to *ASPR Newsletter*, as early as July, 1976:

> Six out-of-body (OBE) projects have been conducted. An OBE "fly-in" and an attempt to correlate OBE's and apparitions both supported the OBE hypothesis, but other interpretations (e.g. ESP) are possible. Perceptual experiments with OBEs and psychophysiological studies of subjects gave similar results: evidence in harmony with OBE hypothesis but other explanations possible. Instrumental recordings (i.e. photos) and a test of mediums gave negative results.
>
> Deathbed studies of apparitions, visions, hallucinations, etc. (reported by attending doctors and nurses) supported the conclusion that "some of the dying patients indeed appeared to be already experiencing glimpses of ecsomatic existence." But again, other interpretations can't be ruled out; so these results "should not be taken as a final balance of evidence for or against survival." Masses of data are still being processed.[321]

Though explainable in other ways, psychical phenomena do serve as an empirical ground for belief in the spirit-world to many people. Further, as Ducasse noted, such evidences did show that 'we need to revise rather radically in some respects our ordinary ideas of what is and what is not possible in nature.[322] And though attempts were made to explain away phenomena such as telepathy, yet some of the most critical and best-documented investigators still hold that it has not yet been absolutely excluded.[323] Such empirical evidence, if not acceptable to materialist scientists, provides strong evidence for the common man to place a belief in the spirit world. Evidently, then, such experiences must have contributed a lot towards the development of animism and spiritism in primitive cultures.

iii. Belief in a Supreme Creator God. The belief in a Supreme Spirit or High God is a phenomenon so common among many tribes, if not all, that it can be considered a major component of tribal theology. It is not very clear as to how the tribes came to have such a belief. The Biblical theory based on Genesis 10 and Acts 17: 26 & 27 is that God made all the races of mankind out of one man, Adam, to inhabit the whole world; thus, the belief in the Supreme God is not a mere result of reasoning or experience but has roots in the original conception of the

---

[319] Richard E. Eby, *Caught Up into Paradise* (New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Company, n.d.).
[320] "Parapsychology," *Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia*.
[321] As cited by Velasquez, *Philosophy*, p. 87
[322] *Ibid*, p. 123
[323] *Ibid*, p. 123

Deity as the One God as given by revelation and communicate to posterity through tradition, to the extent that though the concept of such a God may have blurred in some cultures by extreme enslavement to spiritism, yet the concept has not been totally lost.

Don Richardson, in *Eternity in their Hearts*,[324] gives an account of the concept of a Supreme God in some primitive cultures. He tells the story of how Pachacuti (*Pachacutec*), the builder of the majestic Machu Picchu and ruler of the Inca Empire from A. D. 1438 to 1471, revisited such an antique concept of the One God Viracocha, after discovering that the Sun-God Inti, long regarded as divinity, could not be God. Pachacuti called the Council of Coricancha to discuss this theological discovery. In that council he presented his doubts about the Sun-God Inti in "the three sentences":

1. Inti cannot be universal if, while giving light to some, he withholds it from others.
2. He cannot be perfect if he can never remain at ease, resting.
3. Nor can he be all powerful when the smallest cloud may cover him.325

Pachacuti didn't stop here but went on to revive his upper-class subjects' faint memory of omnipotent Viracocha by listing his awesome attributes. Viracocha was described in the following words:

> He is ancient, remote, supreme, and uncreated. Nor does he need the gross satisfaction of a consort. He manifests himself as a trinity when he wishes,…otherwise only heavenly warriors and archangels surround his loneliness. He created all peoples by his 'word'…as well as all huacas [spirits]. He is man's Fortunus, ordaining his years and nourishing him. He is indeed the very principle of life, for he warms the folk through his created son, Punchao [the sun disk, which was somehow distinct from Inti]. He is a bringer of peace and an orderer. He is in his own being blessed and has pity on men's wretchedness. He alone judges and absolves them and enables them to combat their evil tendencies.[326]

This knowledge of the Supreme, however, was considered to be not the pure result of rational or empirical discovery but a gift of revelation. It is said that Pachacuti's father, Hatun Tupac, once claimed to receive counsel in a dream from Viracocha. Viracocha reminded Hatun Tupac in that

---

[324] Don Richardson, *Eternity in their Hearts*, rev. edn. (California: Regal Books, 1984)
[325] B. C. Brundage, *Empire of the Inca* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1963), p. 163; as cited by Don Richardson, *Eternity in their Hearts,* p.38
[326] B. C. Brundage, *Empire of the Inca* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1963), p. 165; as cited by Don Richardson, *Eternity in their Hearts,* p.38

dream that He was truly the Creator of all things. On knowing this true God, Hatun Tupac promptly renamed himself Viracocha.[327]

Evidently, then the concept of the one God was not derived from experience alone but by God's revelation of himself to Hatun Tupac through a dream, in which he was *reminded* that Viracocha was the true God. Viracocha, however, was already known to Pachacuti's ancestors as evidenced by the shrine called *Quishuarcancha,* located in the upper Vilcanota Valley.[328] Hatun Tupac did not newly discover but only rediscovered this ancient, yet 'basic and genuine' truth. Thus, the concept of the Supreme God among the Inca could not have been the product of either reason or experience but of tradition and revelation.

The same can be said of the Santals in India. The belief in the Supreme God Thakur Jiu ('Thakur' means 'genuine' and 'Jiu' means 'God') was original to the Santals.[329] The departure from Thakur Jiu was prompted by the needs of appeasing spirits in order to ensure survival of the tribe. Thus, the Santals were left with only faint memories of the genuine God. Interestingly, even to the extent of confirming the Biblical theory, the Santal traditional accounts of creation, temptation, and the flood have many similarities with the Biblical account itself.[330] This amounts to, at least, strengthening the view that all humanity had originally one religion and culture, which underwent change as groups divided from each other. Thus, the concept of the One True God is not the product of reason or experience but of traditional testimony, revelation and faith.

The Khasis of Meghalaya have also retained the original concept of the One Supreme God whom they call U Blei. 'U' refers to masculine gender in Khasi; however, since God is considered to be above gender and form, 'Ka' (feminine) and 'Ki' (majestic plural) may also be prefixed to the noun 'Blei' when referring to God.[331] The Khasis believe that U Blei can manifest himself in any form, though He is above form. According to Khasi theology, U Blei has the following attributes:

1. U Blei Nongthaw Nongbuh - God Creator of our bodies and the creation (Nongthaw), and God who fills up and fills the universe with life.
2. U Blei Trai Kynrad - The Lord God and Master.
3. U Blei Shihajar Nguh - God to whom all obeisance is due
4. U Blei na jrong na tbian - God who fills the heavens and the earth (the universe), God who is immanent and transcendent.
5. U Blei U Nongsei - God who causes to be and to grow.

---

[327] Don Richardson, *Eternity in their Hearts,* p. 37
[328] *Ibid,* p. 37
[329] Don Richardson, *Eternity in their Hearts,* p. 42
[330] *Ibid,* pp. 43-44 & T. Hembrom, *The Santals: Anthropological-Theological Reflections on Santali and Biblical Creation Traditions* (Calcutta: Punthi Pustak, 1996), pp.82-119, 224-244
[331] T. Nongsiej, *Khasi Cultural Theology* (Delhi: ISPCK, 2002), p. 23

6. U Blei Uba iohi Uba tip - God who sees and who knows - to whom nothing is hidden or unknown.[332]

Khasi theology seems to have a mixture of revelatory and empirical conceptions of God. Though God is seen as the One Supreme Being, yet empirical notions are not unattached from Him. Roy's interpretation of 'na jrong' and 'na tbian' as transcendent and immanent are theological and philosophical. The word 'transcendent' in philosophy refers to the realm beyond the boundary of possible knowledge, and 'immanent' refers to this physical world. However, in popular parlance, 'na jrong' and 'na tbian' are used in relation to this earth. 'Na jrong' means 'up', i.e., heaven; 'na tbian' means 'down', i.e., earth. Therefore, *U Blei na jrong na tbian* refers to the God who is not just in heaven but also on earth. The heaven, however, as in popular religion, is not a trans-spatio-temporal realm, but a place as earth. According to Khasi mythology, the Diengiei tree is the Golden Ladder that connects heaven and earth at Sohpetbneng peak, mythically regarded as the navel point of the earth.[333] The mythology, evidently, has strong empirical elements and no attempt is made in Khasi tribal theology to separate the empirical from the notion of God; such a need or possibility also doesn't seem to have been felt at any time. However, the possibility of 'na jrong' as 'up there' meaning the transcendent may indicate some cultural and historical connection with the revelation-history. Obviously, however, if it means just 'up there' and 'down here', then it is nothing but empirical.

Among the Ao Nagas, the High God *Lijaba* is considered to be an old man who is so interested in the things of the family and willing to meet all needs that he comes, lives and stays with the people providing all their needs and, thus, becoming one of the family members.[334]

In his book *Revelation and Religion (1954)*, Herbert H. Farmer suggests that monotheistic tendencies in primitive religions may have their basis in the nature of religious consciousness and the concentrative tendency in prayer. According to him, religious awareness by its very nature is closely bound up with, what he calls, 'the sense of unity'. Religion is closely linked to the unifying nature of self-consciousness; therefore, it is not found in animals. Self-conscious experience is not possible without some sense of the unity of the self and of the unity of the world apprehended by the self and these two unities are inseparable from each other. This, eventually, gives rise to the concept of the Supreme High God.[335] Secondly, the fact that the act of prayer and worship has an inherent tendency towards concentration, ultimately, not on many gods but one God, shows that monotheistic faith may have been a natural outcome of such an

[332] David Roy, "Khasi Religion," as cited by R. S. Lyngdoh in "Khasi Concept of Religion" (http://khasi.ws/religion.htm; numberings by researcher).
[333] T. Nongsiej, *Khasi Cultural Theology*, pp. 47, 48 and U Sumar Sing Sawian, "Spiritual Roots of the Hynniewtrep – Seven Huts" (http://khasi.ws/spiritual_roots.htm)
[334] C.A.B. Tirkey, *Religion/Primal Religion*, p. 173
[335] Herbert H. Farmer, *Revelation and Religion* (London: Nisbet & Co., Ltd., 1954), pp. 103-104

act.[336] Thus, according to Farmer, the internal ground of consciousness as a sense of unity and the tendency towards a singular focus of concentration may have led to the primitive belief in one God.

Farmer, however, seems to introduce some problems. First of all, it is not clear how the 'sense of unity' may lead to the conception of a singular entity, God, when most primitive religions find no difficulty in believing that each human person can have more than two spirits or souls. Secondly, concentration in prayer need not lead to belief in only one God; for, in the same manner that one may appeal to different people at different times for different needs and yet be concentrative on each instance, likewise, one may appeal to different 'gods' at different times for different needs and not lose the concentrative element in the appeal. Thus, Farmer's attempt to trace the primitive notion of the Supreme God to some sort of innate tendencies does not appear to be plausible at all.

In conclusion, research shows that experience is at the core of the epistemic method employed in knowing reality and super-reality in tribal theology. In most tribal cultures, it is the phenomena of magic and spirit-worship that is the more practical aspect of religious life. As already seen, both the beliefs in supernatural power and the spirit-world have continuing empirical foundations and not just static traditional endorsement. The reality of magic and the spirit-world, though cynically viewed by anti-supernaturalists, is hard to deny. The author himself has witnessed several cases of spirit-possession and phenomena that cannot all be denounced as psychological illusions. Even if the reality of such phenomena were rejected, the experience itself, claimed as real in several cultures, as (at least, subjectively true) cannot be rejected. Thus, at least subjectively, if not objectively, experience accounts for the origin and development of tribal animism, manaism, and spiritism. As far as the belief in the One Supreme God is concerned, the concept itself seems to have foundations in some ancient tradition or 'revelation'. However, even if the traditional aspect or the possibility of revelation was rejected, it cannot be denied that the notion of God in primal theology possesses strong empirical elements which seem to be devoid of any serious rational treatment similar to that as related in the former chapter.

Empirical characteristics like plurality (of spirits, etc.), immanence (mana, and divine visitation), and changeability (transference of mana, God as Creator, Actor) are readily observable in primal theology. Thus, primal theology has experience at its epistemic foundations.

Polytheism

Polytheism is the belief in many gods and goddesses. In polytheism, the deity is both multiplied and diversified; thus, not only are gods and goddesses many but are also different from each other. The popular theory of the origin of polytheism is that the deities were personification of

[336] *Ibid*, p. 105

the powers of nature. The nature of such personification is very much human or anthropomorphic; consequently, the deities are 'in reality glorified human beings'.[337] They have tendencies, passions, desires, and emotions like humans. The mythologies surrounding each deity give expression to such anthropomorphism. Indubitably, then the account of the nature and character of the deities, as propounded in the mythologies, have their origin in imagination supplied by human experience. The gods and goddesses, thus, may be considered to be the product of a projection of human nature and glorified conception of man. The empirical characteristics of plurality, finitude, contingency, mutability, and immanence are clearly reflected in polytheism, demonstrating its empirical foundations, in the following manner:

i. Plurality. The nature of the diverse deities reflects very much their relation to physical nature. The deities are either assigned headship of different natural forces like earth, sun, moon, wind, air, rain, mountains, rivers, etc or are personified forms of such forces; thus, they reflect the particular strength or quality of the physical element they are associated with. Consequently, the deities are as diverse as the forces of nature and differ considerably from each other. No wonder, then, the deities of polytheism are innumerable. Athens boasted more gods than its population and Hinduism boasts of three hundred and thirty million deities.

ii. Finitude. Mythology well depicts the finite nature of the deities. Reasonably, since the demarcation of the deities along elemental lines of natural forces, a deity cannot be supposed to encroach the boundary of another deity; neither can one deity by nature possess the strength or quality of another deity. Thus, each deity is finite. Moreover, the infinite existence of any one deity renders the existence of any other deity conceptually impossible. Therefore, finite divinity is the best conceptually plausible theory. As Geisler rightly notes, the gods of polytheism are finite and limited in power; they 'operate in limited domains of the natural world and are especially associated with particular natural phenomena, such as the god of rain or the god of wind.'[338] Finite divinity easily explains theodicy or the problem of evil. The deities cannot be considered to be omnipotent, omniscient, or omnipresent. Nature has so many signs of imperfection that to argue of a perfect God on the basis of natural theology is impossible. As John Stuart Mill said, 'Omnipotence…cannot be predicated of the Creator on the grounds of natural theology.'[339] Further, 'the fundamental principles of natural religion as deduced from the facts of the universe, negative his omnipotence.'[340] Thus, finite deity is a more plausible inference of natural religion.

iii. Contingency. The theme of contingent deity is crystal clear in polytheistic mythology. One aspect of contingency is evident in the myths surrounding the creation of gods and goddesses,

---

[337] Hiriyanna, *Indian Philosophy*, p. 31

[338] Norman Geisler, *False Gods of Our Time* (Eugene: Harvest House Publishers, 1985), p.34

[339] John Stuart Mill, "Evil and a Finite God", *Philosophy of Religion* 2nd edn. (ed. John Hick; Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1970), p.182

[340] *Ibid*, p. 182

which also proves that the deities do not possess necessary existence, i.e. they derive their existence from something or someone beyond themselves. In Egyptian mythology, for instance, only the ocean existed at first.

> …Then Ra, the Sun, came out of an egg (or a flower, in some versions) that appeared on the surface of the water. Ra brought forth four children, the gods Shu and Keb and the goddesses Tefnut and Nut. Shu and Tefnut became the atmosphere. They stood on Keb, who became the Earth, and raised up Nut, who became the sky. Ra ruled over all. Keb and Nut later had two sons, Set and Osiris, and two daughters, Isis and Nephthys.[341]

The contingent nature of the deities, evidently, is a concept derived from observing the contingent nature of natural phenomena themselves. For instance, the concept of Ra, the Sun, as giving rise to Shu, Tefnut, Keb, and Nut (atmosphere, earth, and sky) may have its basis on the observation that the Sun, as appeared, seemed to be the ruler of the atmosphere, earth, and sky which it traversed. Such accounts of the origin of gods point to their contingent nature. Another aspect of divine contingency can be found in the view that the gods and goddesses can receive boons or even be cursed. Thus, cursed deities may be born on earth as humans, animals, or plants. Also, the possibility of humans to achieve godhood or divinity through various means points to the contingency of divinity; that is to say, the gods are not gods by necessity, rather anyone aspiring can achieve godhood. In polytheism, the gods do not need to possess the characteristic of necessity in order to be gods. Contingency, obviously, is not an inconsistent attribute of deity in polytheism; thus, demonstrating its empirical basis.

iv. Mutability. The deities of polytheism are seen to change forms, move from place to place, and change decisions. The mutability of the deity in its incarnation can be to such an extent that it even forgets its divinity. For instance, according to one myth surrounding the veneration of the tulsi plant, the goddess Saraswati cursed the goddess Laxmi to become a tulsi plant and thus to live on earth. Laxmi, on being born as tulsi forgot her deity and lived so until she was reminded by Vishnu of her deity, who was, thus, annunciating the termination of her curse also.[342]

Immutability is empirically implausible. The world of experience is not a static world but a dynamic world; consequently, experience itself is dynamic. Therefore, the deity conceptualized in an empirical worldview cannot be static, rather it is dynamic. Thus, changeability and mutability is expected of the empirical deities of polytheism.

v. Immanence. The concept of immanence has at least four aspects in polytheism: deities are equated with the natural objects of worship (e.g., the worship of Sun as god and Agni as the Fire-god), deities are supposed to indwell particular objects (e.g., worship of peepal tree as hosting

---

[341] "Egyptian Mythology", *Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia* (Microsoft Corporation, 2001)
[342] "Tulsi," (http://www.gurjari.net/ico/Mystica/html/tulsi.htm)

the Trimurti),[343] deities are considered to have, mythically, some association with some particular species, object, or place (through incarnation, visitation, implementation, or production) – for instance, the *tulsi* plant is worshipped as originating from the hair of the goddess Laxmi,[344] and fourthly, deities are not considered to be wholly non-physical; that is, the deities possess bodies similar to physical bodies, though somewhat differing in degree: consequently, it is possible for, say, the body of Brahma to be divided into two parts, namely, male and female, or the river Ganges to flow out of the tress of Shiva. It is similarly possible for the deities to cohabit with humans, producing semi-divine beings. Thus, divine immanence is a common element of polytheistic belief.

Pluralism, thus, reigns high in polytheism. The consequences are inevitable. With the pluralization of deity, authority is also pluralized. Consequently, empirical ethics is not absolute but relative. This is clearly evident in Plato's *Euthyphro*, in which Socrates is shown as contending with the young man Euthyphro about the ground of ethical decisions. Euthyphro is on his way to prosecute his father for, what he thinks, an unjust murder of his poor laborer. To this, Socrates wonders whether what Euthyphro is doing is pious or impious, and subsequently a dialogue on the meaning of piety and impiety ensues. In answer to Socrates' question as to what piety and impiety are, Euthyphro answers that piety is 'that which is dear to the gods, and impiety is that which is not dear to them'[345] in accordance with his polytheistic worldview. Socrates, however, is not satisfied since he sees that, mythologically speaking, there are quarrels among the gods indicating that they do not agree with each other about good and evil, just and unjust, honorable and dishonorable; therefore, what is dear to one god may not be dear to the other. In such a case then, Socrates argues, it is difficult to know whether an act is absolutely pious in the sense that the act pleases all the gods the same. Thus, morality is relativized, and pleasing one god may not guarantee pleasing all gods. Paris might have rightly judged the right of Venus over the golden apple (with the inscription 'To the Fairest'); however, this act of 'justice' did cost him the fury of the other goddesses. The Trojan War is a tragic tale of the human suffering caused by the absence of absolutes from a world of polytheism.

In conclusion, it has been seen that polytheism is also an outcome of the empirical epistemics reflecting the empirical characteristics of plurality, finitude, contingency, mutability, and immanence. However, since it lacks a sense of the abstract and absolute underlying ground of values and truth, polytheism relativizes values or values themselves lose their value in the absence of any infinite omnipotent Being who can guarantee the absoluteness of justice.

Pantheism

[343] "Peepal Tree" (http://www.gurjari.net/ico/Mystica/html/peepal_tree.htm)
[344] "Tulsi," (http://www.gurjari.net/ico/Mystica/html/tulsi.htm)
[345] Plato, *The Republic and Other Works* (tr. B. Jowett; New York: Anchor Books, 1989), p. 432

Pantheism is the view that everything, i.e., nature is divine. Pantheism must not be confused with monism or non-dualism, though it has been often been done so, since unlike monism or non-dualism, pantheism does not treat the phenomenal world as lesser reality or illusion. Unlike monism, the plurality of the world is maintained despite of the synonymity of the world with God. Pantheism must also be understood as different from panentheism, according to which the world is not synonymous with God but is in God. Pantheism must also not be confused with divine omnipresence. It is one thing to say that God is everywhere and another thing to say that all is God. The interchangeable usage of 'pantheism' with 'monism' or 'panentheism' must be checked. Thus, by pantheism one must understand the belief that everything is God and God is everything. In other words, 'God and the universe are identical'.[346]

However, God must not be understood as the transcendent one; for, then pantheism would turn into monism or non-dualism. God is immanent to the universe, not in the sense that He lives in it but, He is it. Thus, all nature is divine. Consequently, good and evil, truth and falsehood, honor and dishonor have their entire share in the divine godhead. God is both good and evil, even as nature is both good and evil. In pantheistic emanationalism, the world emanates from God. In this sense, then since the tree contains good and evil, its seed, *viz.*, God also is good and evil. Consequently, God is not as perfect and infinite in any one quality as such. He is a mixture of the perfect and imperfect; this also explains the presence of both good and evil in the universe.

Plurality in pantheism is indicated by the acceptance of the category of 'all'. Each retains its individuality though possessing divine nature. Immanence is clearly seen. God is not seen as transcending the universe but simply as the universe. Finitude is obvious in the characterization of God as the not-fully-perfect one. Thus, at the foundation of pantheism can be seen the empirical characteristics of plurality, finitude, and immanence.

Panentheism

Panentheism is the belief that God is in the world the way a soul or mind is in the body.[347] In the modern world, panentheism has received much philosophical treatment in process theology. A. N. Whitehead's *Process and Reality* gives a lucid and systematic account of process theology. Process theology must be understood in the background of evolutionism. The tendency to look at the divine as *along with* or *through* the physical world was already observed in the writings of Hegel and Bergson. However, it was Whitehead who systematically dealt with the notion of God as related to process reality. It can very clearly be seen that process theology is an attempt to fuse the rational transcendental view of God with the empirical immanent view of God. This, however, is done based on a dualistic understanding of the universe as mental and physical. It is difficult to show how the mental is exactly related to the physical, similar to the difficulty of

[346] Velasquez, *Philosophy*, p. 146
[347] Norman Geisler, *Christian Apologetics* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House,1995), p. 193

showing the mind's relation to the body. However, the mental can be seen as transcendent to the physical, yet greatly interacting with and influencing, at the same time being influenced by, the physical. Consequently, what appears at first as transcendent is not exactly transcendent but is the other pole of the immanent, being connected by the same thread and so related to each other.

According to Whitehead, the concept of God as the 'unmoved mover', as a transcendent creator imposing on the world His absolute will is 'the fallacy which has infused tragedy into the histories of Christianity and Mahometanism',[348] i.e., Islam. The resultant image of God as an imperial ruler, as a personification of moral energy, and as an ultimate philosophical principle was untenable. God and the world must be seen as sharing the same process and being dependent on each other for growth and development.[349] God not only influences the world process, but is in turn affected by it.

Whitehead's panentheism may also be called bipolar theism. God, accordingly, has two poles or two natures, *viz.* the primordial nature and the consequent nature. In his primordial nature, God is independent of the world; however, in his consequent nature, he is dependent on the world, being submerged in its process and affected continuously by it. Thus, the transcendence and the immanence of divinity are considered to co-exist. Different theologians, following Whitehead have tried to formulate the view of divine process along slightly different lines, though basically retaining the major tenets. According to Geisler the major tenets of panentheism are as follows:[350]

1. God is related to the world as a soul or mind is related to a body. In other words, the world is God's body. God is, thus, both immanent and transcendent to the world; immanent, in the sense that he is intimately and internally related with the world though not identical with it; transcendent, in the sense that God is not identical with the world but is more than the world.
2. God has two poles: a potential pole and an actual pole. In his potentiality God is absolute, eternal, and infinite. In his actuality, he is relative, temporal, and finite. In his primordial nature, God is imperishable. In his consequent nature, he is changing.
3. The world is not created ex nihilo, or out of nothing. It is formed ex hulās, that is, out of something eternally there at the other pole. According to Charles Hartshorne, the term creator can perfectly well be used by one who denies creation ex nihilo. The phrase 'to make the world' out of a preceding world is not only no abuse of language but the very meaning that language supports.351 Matter and Mind (the physical and mental poles) are eternal and uncreated. Mind directs matter (i.e., the primordial directs the consequent).

[348] Alfred North Whitehead, *Process and Reality* (New York: The Free Press, 1978)
[349] "Process Theology," *Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia* (Microsoft Corporation, 2001)
[350] Norman Geisler, *Christian Apologetics*, pp. 206-207
[351] Charles Hartshorne, *Man's Vision of God* (Hamden: Archon Books, 1964), p. 231

4. God and the world are interrelated and interdependent. Accordingly, the world depends on God for its necessary ground, while God depends on the world for his manifestation or embodiment. In other words, each is contingent on the other in some way or the other.
5. God is continually growing in perfections due to the increase in value in the world (his body) resulting from human effort. God is changing, though towards perfection.
6. Since God is finite, it is not possible to overcome all evil. Hence, evil will not be ultimately defeated or destroyed.

Evidently, the transcendent nature of God, as stressed by process panentheism is pseudonymous. How can God be transcendent to the world if he is at the same time undergoing change *with* the world? The God of process theology is in reality more immanent to nature than transcendent to it. It is, in addition, inconsistent to hold that the transcendent as already perfect designs its own process of perfection. As Geisler notes, 'How can God actualize his own potentialities?'[352] It is like trying to pull oneself up by one's own boot straps. However, the attempt to show the divine as undergoing change, in face of already prevalent concepts of immutability and transcendence, is evident in process theology. The focal point, thus, is clearly the immanent and changeable nature of the deity, and the concepts of transcendence and eternality are only reinterpreted to accommodate or suit the doctrine.

The concept of contingency is well evident in the theory of mutual sharing and influencing, according to which not only God influences the world process but is also affected by it. The empirical quality of finitude is also not left out. Attributing finitude to the divine is an easy way of solving the problem of evil. Thus, finitude can mean limitation of knowledge and power. Consequently, though God is designer of the world process, he is only an imperfect designer who in the process of influencing the world impersonally,[353] is also affecting himself[354] and undergoing perfection.

Evidently, then the empirical characteristics of finitude, immanence, changeability, and contingency are clearly seen in the panentheistic conception of divinity.

Thus, it has been shown that primal animistic theology, polytheism, pantheism, and panentheism basically teach the plurality, immanence, finitude, contingency, and changeability of divinity. Though panentheism doesn't teach that the divine is plural, yet its acceptance of the plural world and its division of the godhead into primordial and consequent tends towards a pluralistic perception of ultimate reality and God.

---

[352] Norman Geisler, *Christian Apologetics*, p. 208
[353] Norman Geisler, *False Gods*, p. 30
[354] The pronouns 'he' 'his' 'himself', etc used hitherto far for the Process Divinity may not be appropriate, though used to avoid awkwardness. The impersonal deity of Process Theology may be better referred by 'it,' 'itself' etc.

Consequently, it is seen that the empirical epistemics of divine reality do not go beyond the limits of experience and regard divinity to be empirically conceivable. Animism and polytheism multiply and diversify the deities. Pantheism, it was stated, not to be confused with monism, regards all nature as divine. Pantheism does retain the notion of plurality though attributing divinity to everything. It has also been shown that these theologies only reflect the results of empirical observations and are consistent in maintaining the phenomenal reality of the universe as plural, contingent, changing, and finite. However, this is done at the expense of reason. Consequently, absolutes and abstract values are in danger. Good and evil are the result of imperfect creation either synonymous with or continuous with divinity which itself is imperfect, finite, and changing. As such, the world does not have a necessary, unified, eternal, and immutable ground of existence.

Non-theological Positions

Although, as has been seen, empirical approaches towards divine reality have yielded some conception of the divine as in the case of animism, polytheism, pantheism, and panentheism, yet there have also been empirical approaches that tended to be non-theological, in the sense that they provided an epistemological method of enquiry that either allowed or disallowed the knowledge of divine reality. The case of the Indian Charvakas has already been stated. Their insistence on the validity of experience or direct perception alone as the source of knowledge led them to deny any belief in the supernatural. In the modern age, there have at least been two epistemic movements that have tended to be antagonistic towards faith in divine reality; the first being skepticism as represented by David Hume (1711-1776) and the second being the logical positivism movement of the Vienna Circle. Two other epistemic positions, one of old, *viz.* mysticism, and the other relatively new, *viz.* pragmatism are in favor of some kind of religious belief, though with some reservations; however, both of these epistemic positions do not really specify any particular religious-belief system, yet may be applicable with certain positive results within any religious system. For instance, Christians and Hindus alike can use the pragmatic theory of truth in favor of their own religious propositions. Likewise, mysticism is found among different religions like Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam. Thus, both mysticism and pragmatism may be considered to be non-theological and yet in favor of theology. In this section each of the four positions will be studied to see the results of non-theological empirical epistemics for divine reality.

Skepticism of David Hume

The arguments of David Hume against theism may be divided into at least three categories: the empirical argument against design, the empirical argument against miracles, and the empirical argument against divine benevolence.

i. Empirical Argument against Design. Hume's argument against design is an attack on the rationalist attempt to prove the existence of God on the basis of the design or teleological argument. The epistemological basis of this argument is Hume's skeptical approach to knowledge that contends that one cannot know anything beyond one's experience. Since, 'our ideas reach no farther than our experience' and we 'have no experience of divine attributes and operations' it is established that the nature of the Supreme Being is both adorably mysterious and incomprehensible.[355] Thus, skepticism is the only possible epistemology when divine reality is concerned.

It may be argued that nature displays a pattern and order pointing to the existence of a rational and intelligent Deity possessing intelligence like humans who by intelligence make things and maintain order. However, such analogical reasoning, Hume contends, is too farfetched. One can infer that there is blood circulation in Titius and Maevius on the basis of experiencing the same in all human creatures encountered. However, it is only speculation to reason that vegetables must have sap circulation since blood circulation is found in frogs. In other words, errors in analogical reasoning can be traced back to dissimilarities between the cases.

In the design argument, the dissimilarity between the cases is found in reckoning the universe as similar to a machine or piece of architecture, and thence reasoning the existence of a Supreme Designer or Architect. However, Hume argues, it cannot be affirmed that 'the universe bears such a resemblance to a house that we can with the same certainty infer a similar cause, or that the analogy is here entire and perfect.' The dissimilitude is striking.[356]

Further, one doesn't have the experience of the origin of the worlds in the same manner that he has seen ships and cities arise from human art and contrivance.[357] Therefore, the induction of Divine Intelligence from cases of human intelligence is based on insufficient or irrelevant data and inadequate analogy.

Also, experience is more in support of polytheism rather than monotheism, as far as creation of this great universe is concerned. Thus, Hume asks, 'A great number of men join in building a house or ship, in rearing a city, in framing a commonwealth; why may not several deities combine in contriving and framing a world?'[358] In addition, the world does not appear to be perfect at all and only points to a creator who is imperfect, subordinate, dead, or evil. Thus, the design argument leads to increased skepticism, making faith impossible. Hume asks,

[355] David Hume, "Against the Design Argument", *Philosophy of Religion* 2nd edn. (ed. John Hick; Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1970), p.73
[356] *Ibid*, p. 74
[357] *Ibid*, p. 78
[358] *Ibid*, p. 87

> While we are uncertain whether there is one deity or many, whether the deity or deities, to whom we owe our existence, be perfect or imperfect, subordinate or supreme, dead or alive, what trust or confidence can we repose in them? What devotion or worship address to them? What veneration or obedience pay them? To all the purposes of life the theory of religion becomes altogether useless; and even with regard to speculative consequences its uncertainty… must render it totally precarious and unsatisfactory.[359]

Thus, experience cannot lead to any certainty of divine knowledge and skepticism is the only final possibility of empirical epistemics.

ii. The Empirical Argument against Miracles. Hume begins by arguing that since experience cannot be taken to be an infallible guide, a wise man must proportion his belief to the evidence, which is based on his past experiences. Now experience has established the laws of nature. Since, a 'miracle is a violation of the laws of nature; and as a firm and unalterable experience has established these laws, the proof against a miracle, from the very nature of the fact, is as entire as any argument from experience can possibly be imagined.'[360] Thus, reports or testimonies regarding miraculous events are contrary to experience and are untrustworthy. Moreover, there is not to be found, Hume contends, in all history, any miracle attested by a sufficient number of men, of such unquestioned good sense, education, and learning, as to testify their capacity to be immune to delusions. Hume goes on to say that the 'many instances of forged miracles, and prophecies, and supernatural events, which, in all ages, have either been detected by contrary evidence, or which detect themselves by their absurdity, prove sufficiently the strong propensity of mankind to the extraordinary and the marvellous, and ought reasonably to beget a suspicion against all relations of this kind.'[361]

However, Hume's empirical arguments do not rule out the possibility of miracle at all. At the most, empirical inductions can only contain a high degree of probability and do not entirely disprove or prove anything. Consequently, sufficient cases of genuine miraculous events can serve as basis for a belief in miracles. But, since *to Hume* such sufficient instances do not exist and cannot be proved to be genuine, miracles are impossible.

iii. Empirical Argument against Divine Benevolence. Hume argues that if God were really benevolent, he would not produce this world that is so full of vice, misery, and disorder. All nature left to its own struggle for survival in capacities so finite before the gigantic dangers of life is what all constitutes the panorama of experience. A good God, even if finite, would never have contrived such a world. Thus, Hume argues, 'Were all living creatures incapable of pain, or were the world administered by particular volitions, evil never could have found access into the

---

[359] *Ibid*, p. 88
[360] David Hume, "Miracles", *Ibid*, p. 116
[361] *Ibid*, p. 118

universe; and were animals endowed with a large stock of powers and faculties, beyond what strict necessity requires, or were the several springs and principles of the universe so accurately framed as to preserve always the just temperament and medium, there must have been very little ill in comparison of what we feel at present?'[362] However, quite contrarily the whole panorama of experience presents nothing but 'the idea of a blind nature, impregnated by a great vivifying principle, and pouring forth from her lap, without discernment or parental care, her maimed and abortive children!'[363]

Thus, the concept of an infinite, omniscient, good, and caring God, according to Hume, is contrary to experience. In response to such interpretation of experience by Hume, the researcher contends that the negative picture of reality that Hume came up with was nothing but the a development of his own skeptical outlook. As will be discussed in the next chapter under Rational Fideism, the polarization of will-to-doubt eventually has led Hume to a skepticism that can see no traces of divine benevolence in the nature of things. On the other hand, it is obvious that the will-to-believe leads several others to see meaning and divine providence in nature.[364]

Nevertheless, faith assumes a transcending approach to empirical reality. Faith reaches out to seek meaning from a transcendent reality where experience fails to provide any meaning. Consequently, since experience tells nothing about the reason behind the universe, one can only remain skeptical, or in doubt, regarding the ultimate reality, of the existence or non-existence of and the attributes of divinity.

Logical Positivism

Logical positivism is the position that only analytic and synthetic statements are meaningful and that because metaphysical and ethical statements are neither, the latter are meaningless.[365] By analytic statements are meant those statements that comprise the *a priori* propositions of logic and pure mathematics; by synthetic statements, those that comprise empirical facts. Accordingly, all metaphysical statements are nonsensical since they are neither analytic nor synthetic, i.e., verifiable by experience.

According to A. J. Ayer (1910-1989), any statement that is neither a tautology nor a statement of fact, is meaningless and nonsensical. They are nonsensical in the sense that their sense or meaning is not obtainable by reference to sense-experience. He writes:

[362] David Hume, "A Good God Would Exclude Evil", *Classic Philosophical Questions*, 7th edn. (ed. James A. Gould; New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1992), p. 427
[363] *Ibid*, pp. 427-428
[364] Leo Tolstoy, "Faith Provides Life's Meaning", *Classic Philosophical Questions*, 7th edn. (ed. James A. Gould; New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1992), pp. 590-599
[365] Velasquez, *Philosophy*, p. 244

> One way of attacking a metaphysician who claimed to have knowledge of a reality which transcended the phenomenal world would be to enquire from what premises his propositions were deduced. Must he not begin, as other men do, with the evidence of his senses? And if so, what valid process of reasoning can possibly lead him to the conception of a transcendent reality? Surely from empirical premises nothing whatsoever concerning the properties, or even the existence, of anything super-empirical can legitimately be inferred.[366]

Ayer further contends that the metaphysician produces sentences which fail to conform to the conditions under which alone a sentence can be literally significant. Metaphysical statements have no meaning in empirical terms. Thus, experience, which is the true source of knowledge, cannot be the basis of metaphysics. Ayer advances the criterion of verifiability, or the verification principle, as test for the genuineness of apparent statements of fact. According to this principle then, 'a sentence is factually significant to any given person if, and only if, he knows how to verify the proposition which it purports to express – that is, if he knows what observations would lead him, under certain conditions, to accept the proposition as being true, or reject it as being false.'[367] Ayer differentiates practical verifiability and verifiability in principle. For instance, the proposition that there are mountains on the further side of the moon would not have been practically verifiable back in 1939 when no rocket able to convey a person there had yet been invented. However, this proposition was verifiable in principle since it could then be known what observations would decide, if as theoretically conceivable one were in the position to make them. However, since metaphysical propositions do not admit such verification they are to be regarded as nonsensical. In his *An Empiricist's View of the Nature of Religious Belief*, R. B. Braithwaite suggests that there are three classes of statement whose method of truth-value testing is in general outline clear: 'statements about particular matters of empirical fact, scientific hypotheses and other general empirical statements, and the logically necessary statements of logic and mathematics (and their contradictions).'[368] Obviously, theological statements do not concern particular matters of empirical fact; for instance, the theological proposition, 'God is personal' is not a property that can be known by direct observation. Theological propositions cannot also be regarded as scientific explanations in the empirical: theological statements do not answer how the world would be different if there were no personal God. However, it may be contended that theological propositions resemble propositions of logic and mathematics; but this however cannot be extended to necessitate their reality in existence. Thus, since religious statements, as normally used, have no place in this trichotomy, their meaningfulness is under question. However, Braithwaite does not consider religious statements to be totally devoid of all meaning. He advances the hypothesis that religious assertions have the use of announcing

---

[366] A. J. Ayer, "The Elimination of Metaphysics," *Philosophy Looks to the Future*, 2nd edn. (eds. Peyton E. Richter & Walter L. Fogg; Illinois: Waveland Press, Inc., 1985), p. 81

[367] *Ibid*, p. 82

[368] R. B. Braithwaite, *An Empiricist's View of the Nature of Religious Belief* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1955), p. 4

allegiance to a set of moral principles; accordingly, a religious assertion is 'the assertion of an intention to carry out a certain behaviour policy, subsumable under a sufficiently general principle to be a moral one, together with the implicit or explicit statement, but not the assertion, of certain stories.'[369] However, in its literal form a religious statement is only meaningless. Thus, intention or feeling becomes the sense of religious statements.

In a paper of 1949, Anthony Flew applied the falsification principle to the belief in God as the designer of nature and to the belief that God loves us and thus unleashed an attack on theism.[370] According to the falsification principle, any proposition set in such a way that renders it beyond empirical falsification, at least in principle, is meaningless. Since, statements like 'God loves the world' and 'God exists' do not admit of any state of affairs that can falsify them, they are essentially meaningless. For, even all suffering and pain in the world and whatever empirical evidence one may try to bring against the statement, all such evidence will not at all count against the statement 'God loves the world'; as a matter of fact, the words 'God' and 'love' would be so many times reinterpreted and modified by the believer to count against the evidence that the words itself die a 'death by a thousand qualifications'[371] and gradually become emptied of all empirical meaning. In Flew's words:

> Now it often seems to people who are not religious as if there was no conceivable event or series of events the occurrence of which would be admitted by sophisticated religious people to be a sufficient reason for conceding "There wasn't a God after all" or "God does not really love us then." Someone tells us that God loves us as a father loves his children. We are reassured. But then we see a child dying of inoperable cancer of the throat. His earthly father is driven frantic in his efforts to help, but his Heavenly Father reveals no obvious sign of concern. Some qualification is made – God's love is "not a merely human love" or it is "an inscrutable love," perhaps – and we realize that "God loves us as a father (but, of course, …)." We are reassured again. But then perhaps we ask: what is this assurance of God's (appropriately qualified) love worth, what is this apparent guarantee really a guarantee against? Just what would have to happen not merely (morally and wrongly) to tempt but also (logically and rightly) to entitle us to say "God does not love us" or even "God does not exist"? I therefore put…the simple central questions, "What would have to occur or to have occurred to constitute … a disproof of the love of, or of the existence of, God?"[372]

The verification principle and the falsification principle, however, have been regarded by later philosophers as quite inadequate and self-defeating. For, if only tautological or empirically

---

[369] *Ibid*, p. 32

[370] Diogenes Allen, *Philosophy for Understanding Theology* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1985), p. 264

[371] Antony Flew, R. M. Hare, and Basil Mitchell, "A Debate on the Rationality of Religious Belief," *Introduction to Philosophy* (Louis P. Pojman; Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1991), p. 237

[372] Antony Flew, R. M. Hare, Basil Mitchell, and I. M. Crombie, "Theology and Falsification", *Philosophy of Religion* 2nd edn. (ed. John Hick; Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1970), p.466

verifiable statements alone are meaningful, then the verification principle itself would be meaningless being neither tautological nor empirically verifiable.[373] In the same manner, Flew's falsification principle when applied to itself defeats it. Obviously, Flew would himself not accept anything to count against his falsification principle; for if he admitted of any such, his falsification principle could not be an absolute criterion of meaning. But such is the nature of metaphysical propositions; they tend to claim absoluteness. No wonder then Wittgenstein remarked that the criterion was a piece of metaphysics and a useful *nonsense*.[374] Following are some difficulties scholars find in logical positivism:

1. Logical positivism renders philosophy as a slave of science. Logical positivism gives more importance to the scientific experimental method and accepts only propositions verifiable scientifically. However, it is obvious that there is a body of knowledge that can only be philosophically treated.375
2. The verification principle itself is not verifiable. The logical positivists could not give sufficient reasons for the validity of assuming sense experience as the criterion of meaning.376
3. The verification principle dealt with only a particular category of statements. It only showed that there are also various kinds of statements, including theological and metaphysical ones, which do not fall into its category of statements.377
4. In his Philosophical Investigations (1953), Ludwig Wittgenstein demonstrated the many functions of language and of meaning as dependent on language games, use, and forms of life. Thus, the meaning of a word can be determined by looking at the ways it is used. The meaning of words may differ from context to context depending on the way they are used in each context, which Wittgenstein terms the 'language game' of the word. Similarly, the meaning of a word can only be understood by participation in the form of life pertaining to the world or language game in which a word finds its use and meaning. For instance, 'honest' and 'lying' have no role or function or use in the kind of life a dog leads and so the question it is incorrect to say that dogs do not lie since they are honest. Likewise, there are forms of life among humans that need to be understood in order to understand the words used there in. Thus, religious language has its place in a form of life to which particular individuals may or may not have access, and so some notion like 'a creator' appearing meaningless to one person may not in fact be absolutely meaningless, since it is meaningful to someone else who participates in a form of life in which 'a

[373] Hridaynarayan Mishra, *Paschatya Darshan ki Samasyaye*, p. 183
[374] Colin Brown, *Philosophy & the Christian Faith* (Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1968), p. 174
[375] Hridaynarayan Mishra, *Paschatya Darshan ki Samasyaye*, p. 193
[376] Samuel Enoch Stumpf, *Socrates to Sartre*, p.460
[377] Colin Brown, *Philosophy & the Christian Faith*, p. 175

creator' does possess meaning.[378] Thus, meaning cannot be restricted to the scientific genre of literature alone.

Thus, it has been shown that a purely empirical approach of logical positivism, focusing on sense-experience alone, led to a rejection of all metaphysics and theology. However, it has also been shown that such extreme and restricted empiricism is ultimately self-defeating and incapable to deal with the wider avenue of human experience.

Pragmatism

Charles S. Peirce (1893-1914) coined the term 'pragmatism' from the Greek word *pragma* (meaning act or deed)[379] for the philosophical position that defined truth in terms of workability. According to pragmatism, the test of the truth of any proposition is its utility. William James defined pragmatism as 'the attitude of looking away from first things, principles, 'categories,' supposed necessities; and of looking towards last things, fruits, consequences, facts.'[380] According to the pragmatist view, 'reality is hardly a single thing: It is pluralistic.'[381] The only thing that matters, therefore, is not what ultimate reality is but what is ultimately *useful*. Thus, the end decides the validity of the means. In this sense then, it is not important whether God exists or not. The only thing that matters is whether belief in God's existence is useful or not. Following are certain characteristics of truth as understood in pragmatism:[382]

1. Truth is man-made. According to William James, truth is an adjective of knowledge that works in life. Truth is the result of human evaluation. Just as a thing is called heavy or light, long or short, to express the effects of human measurements similarly knowledge or belief is called true or false to express the effect of human valuation of it. By itself it would neither be true or false. Truth is made just as health, wealth and strength are made in the course of experience. Thus, truth is human engineered and not absolute.
2. Truth is mutable. Truths are bound to be particular, relative, and therefore subject to change. The truth of any proposition depends on the context. For instance, the theories of Ptolemy were true to those of his context; but now, appear false. Thus, truths are neither absolute nor permanent. According to John Dewey, there can be no eternal and necessary truth.
3. Truth is synonymous with utility. According to James, one can say of something that 'it is useful because it is true' or that 'it is true because it is useful.' Both these uses mean exactly the same thing, namely that here is an idea that gets fulfilled and can be verified.

[378] Diogenes Allen, *Philosophy for Understanding Theology*, pp. 266-268
[379] Samuel Enoch Stumpf, *Socrates to Sartre*, p.412
[380] As cited by Velasquez, *Philosophy*, p. 223
[381] *Ibid*, p. 223
[382] Hridaynarayan Mishra, *Paschatya Darshan*, pp. 155-158

4. There are degrees of truth, according to James, depending on its degree of utility in one's life. Truth is true in a degree proportionate to its level of use in one's life. Thus, useless truths are no truths.
5. Truth is only one species of good, and not, as is usually supposed, a category distinct from good. To say, for instance, that a fan is good is to say that it is fulfilling its functions properly; in other words, it is useful. In the same way, to say that a proposition is true means to say that it is useful or good.
6. According to John Dewey, truth is warranted assertability. That is, any claim can only be true if its assertion is warranted by successful and practical results. Thus, any assertion can only be true if it is useful in scientific expedition or discovery.

The implication for religious knowledge is that religious knowledge cannot be segregated from its utility. In other words, the truthfulness of religious claims depends on whether they are useful or not. Obviously, pragmatists find that some religious beliefs like the belief in God and life after death are useful. For, they not only provide internal peace but add meaning to all the actions of life. According to William James, 'since belief is measure by action, he who forbids us to believe religion to be true necessarily also forbids us to act as we should if we did believe it to be true.' Consequently, 'the whole defense of religious faith hinges upon action.'[383] Thus, whether one believes in God or didn't believe in God is an important question since the answer decides one's walk of life and, obviously, its consequences for self and society.

However, critics have pointed out that the pragmatist acceptance of religious belief in God, immortality, etc. on the grounds of the criterion of utility is engrossed with so many problems. First of all, pragmatists do not offer any serious philosophical argument for the belief in the existence of God apart from the usefulness of the belief. Such delinquency in reasoning cannot be considered to be appropriate when belief in God is of such nature that a person's whole way of living and perhaps even the afterlife may be at stake. Secondly, the law of utility, apart from proving whether a particular belief has presently some use or not, can prove nothing about the truthfulness or falsity of a claim. Thirdly, it has been argued that religion may not be indispensable to good conduct. However, this view is yet to prove true by means of 'empirical investigation' which is not within the purview of philosophy.[384] Further, there is a great possibility that any of the religious views, often contradictory to each other, may be proved to be useful. But since contradictions entail that either one or none of them is true, usefulness cannot stand as a standard test for truth. Finally, the pragmatist treatment of God as a means to some end is not in keeping with the spirit of religion.[385] Religion claims that it has the treasure of eternal truths, but pragmatism approaches it with not an interest towards such truths but with the interest

[383] Geisler, *Christian Apologetics*, p. 108
[384] John Hospers, *Philosophical Analysis*, p. 448
[385] Hridaynarayan Mishra, *Paschatya Darshan*, p. 169

of getting something out of it. This disinterest with truth is against the spirit of philosophy. This is what Russell had to say regarding the utility approach towards religion:

> I can respect the men who argue that religion is true and therefore ought to be believed, but I can feel only profound reprobation for those who say that religion ought to be believed because it is useful, and that to ask whether it is true is a waste of time.[386]

Thus, though accepting the usefulness of the concept of God, the pragmatist is not able to establish with certainty the existence of God and His attributes. In fact, since to the pragmatist eternal and necessary truth doesn't exist, therefore the concept of an existent God is of little consequence unless affecting the prospect of life. Some Christians have found the pragmatic test for truth highly appealing in an apologetic of their faith.[387] However, livability of some religious proposition alone may not validate its veracity. If that were true then the survival of polytheistic, atheistic, pantheistic, monistic, and monotheistic religions even to this present generation is evidence enough that the adherents of each of the religions find their own religions quite livable with and thus, pragmatically useful. However, it is certain that not all of them can be true at the same time since their tenets contradict each other. Therefore, the pragmatist approach cannot be accepted as tenable in the epistemics of divine reality.

Mysticism

'Mysticism' is the philosophy of religion which contends that reality can be known only when we surrender our individuality and experience a union with the divine ground of all existence.[388] Mysticism as it appears in various religious traditions gives evidence of the fact that it does not essentially teach some knowledge of God or ultimate reality but is closely related to the ideological background of the mystic. Thus, according to William James,

> …The fact is that the mystical feeling of enlargement, union, and emancipation has no specific intellectual content whatever of its own. It is capable of forming matrimonial alliances with material furnished by the most diverse philosophies and theologies, provided only they can find a place in their framework for its peculiar emotional mood. We have no right, therefore, to invoke its prestige as distinctively in favor of any special belief, such as that in absolute idealism, or in the absolute monistic identity, or in the absolute goodness, or the world. It is only relatively in favor of all these things – it passes out of common human consciousness in the direction in which they lie.[389]

[386] As cited by John Hospers, *Philosophical Analysis*, p. 449
[387] Geisler, *Christian Apologetics*, p. 110
[388] Velasquez, *Philosophy*, p. 156
[389] William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (New York: Collier Books, 1961), pp. 333-334

Thus, mysticism is a non-theological school adhering to diverse and often contradictory belief systems. It yields no absolute knowledge of the divine. It is also quite opposed to the rational and focuses on the empirical.

Mysticism maintains that the mystic experience uncovers the unified nature of ultimate reality; that the experience of ultimate reality in mysticism is not only mysterious, but also non-rational and involving uncanny feelings of dread and infinite dependence and a profound experience of bliss and love.[390] Thus, unlike dry rational monism, mysticism is the experiencing of union with ultimate reality. It may not be one of identification with the ultimate reality but an infinite-depth-blissful-conscious 'drinking of' or 'drowning in' or 'suffusion with' kind of experiencing the ultimate reality.

In *Advaita*, mysticism is the way of knowledge that transcends or rational and verbal categories. The ultimate experience is called *Samadhi*, indicating the losing or submergence of the individual self in the Infinite Self; thus, it is also called Self-realization. Referring to such an experience as the vision of God, Ramakrishna says that *ananda* or 'the enjoyment of perfect bliss within, is one of the signs of God-vision.'[391] Along with an experience of bliss comes a deepening and intensifying of the love of God 'after Realisation,' and results in a despising attitude towards the gross objects of the world.[392] However, this experience of the God-vision is not communicable; it is ineffable.[393] According to Ramakrishna, the experiencing of God involves great spurts of tremendous and unexplainable yet blissful feelings.

Obviously, such experiencing can only be possible under acceptance of at least some plurality of entities. The attribution of 'infinity' to such ultimate reality can only be arbitrary and not founded on any experience of any sort; in fact, as been shown in the previous chapter, it is a rational attribution and not an empirical one. It is empirically impossible to fathom infinite existence, unless the mystic experience itself involves knowledge equaling omniscience. However, since that is not the case, the mystic doesn't claim omniscience in the experiencing of union with ultimate reality, the attribution of infinity and even unity (in the sense of identicality) are not results of the mystical experience but, as already seen, rational projections. The mystic's insistence on the 'infinity' of God and other attributes are, as been seen, the result of his/ her pre-understanding provided by the religion or tradition he/she adheres to. On the other hand, the attribution of bliss, consciousness, and love are very well founded on some experience in which the subjective emotions are charged. Such subjective experience, however, cannot guarantee objective validity. As William James saw it, while the revelations of the mystic are true, they are so only for the mystic; for others they are certainly ideas to be considered, but hold no claim to

390 *Ibid*, pp. 156-158
391 *Teachings of Sri Ramakrishna* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1994), p. 274
392 *Ibid*, p. 296
393 *Ibid*, p. 297

truth without personal experience of such.[394] Consequently he says, 'non-mystics are under no obligation to acknowledge in mystical states a superior authority conferred on them by their intrinsic nature.'[395]

In addition, the somatic dimension of such experiences has already been uncovered by science. For, it has been found out that such mystical experiences can be easily induced by the help of drugs. Following is a list and description of some drugs, according to Wikipedia internet encyclopedia, that can induce mystic experiences like vision and a distortion of the sensory perception (like in dreams in a state of sleep):[396]

1. *Cannabis sativa*. It is used in religious practices in Indian and African communities
2. Hallucinogenic Mushrooms like *Psilocybe mexicana, amanita muscaria* (fly agaric) are used by cultists in Latin America and Mexico.
3. *Peyote* used by some Indian communities of Mexico. The chief active principle of peyote is an alkaloid called mescaline. Like psilocin and psilocybin, mescaline is reputed to produce visions and other evidences of a mystical nature.
4. *Ayahuasca*, *caapi*, or *yajé*, is produced from the stem bark of the vines *Banisteriopsis caapi* and *B. inebrians*. Indians who use it claim that its virtues include healing powers and the power to induce clairvoyance, among others. This drink has been certified by investigators to produce remarkable effects, often involving the sensation of flying. The effects are thought to be attributable to the action of harmine, a very stable indole that is the active principle in the plant.
5. *Kava* drink, prepared from the roots of *Piper methysticum*, a species of pepper, and seemingly more of a hypnotic-narcotic than a hallucinogen, is used both socially and ritually in the South Pacific, especially in Polynesia.
6. *Iboga*, or ibogaine, a powerful stimulant and hallucinogen derived from the root of the African shrub Tabernanthe iboga (and, like psilocybin and harmine, a chemical relative of LSD) is used by the Bwiti cult in Central Africa.
7. *Coca*, source of cocaine, has had both ritual and social use chiefly in Peru.
8. *Datura*, one species of which is the jimsonweed, is used by native peoples in North and South America; the active principle, however, is highly toxic and dangerous. A drink prepared from the shrub *Mimosa hostilis*, which is said to produce glorious visions in warriors before battle, is used ritually in the ajuca ceremony of the Jurema cult in eastern Brazil.
9. *Salvia divinorum*, a member of the sage family of plants, is a hallucinogen used by Mazatec shamans for "spiritual journeys" during healing.

---

[394] "Psychology of Religion" (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Psychology_of_religion)
[395] William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, p. 334
[396] "Psychology of Religion" (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Psychology_of_religion)

Observations have shown that the experience resulting from the use of such drugs is in no way different from those induced by meditation and concentration practices. The mind-altering effects of the LSD drug can produce a sense of achieving supposed insights into the universe, nature, and self.[397] Also, some kind of ascetic practice or body-restraining disciplines and meditation practices have been associated with religious mysticism. Thus, some kind of psycho-physical alteration is integral to mysticism. The use of drugs does definitely intensify such alteration. As William James saw it:

> Nitrous oxide and ether, especially nitrous oxide, when sufficiently diluted with air, stimulate the mystical consciousness in an extraordinary degree. Depth beyond depth of truth seems revealed to the inhaler. This truth fades out, however, or escapes, at the moment of coming to; and if any words remain over in which it seemed to clothe itself, they prove to be the veriest nonsense. Nevertheless, the sense of a profound meaning having been there persists; and I know more than one person who is persuaded that in the nitrous oxide trance we have a genuine metaphysical revelation.[398]

In other words, James is saying that the mystic experience actually yields no permanent 'memorable' knowledge of reality; it only leaves a sense that there *was* knowledge. However, as a pragmatist James didn't look at whether the experience really produced knowledge of truth but only evaluated the value of such experience in the life of the mystic. Thus, noting the medical tendency to wave off the mystical states as some kind of hysteria, he contended that to 'pass a spiritual judgment upon these states, we must not content ourselves with superficial medical talk, but inquire into their fruits for life.'[399] He argues that the positive effects of the mystical experiences in the lives of mystics are so great that the value of mysticism cannot be underestimated.

However, the negative facts are even more alarming. For instance, it is reported that the mystic state is no different from the experience of acute mania and lunacy.[400] People practicing Transcendental Meditation report a number of adverse effects like anxiety, confusion, demonic oppression, and frustration that are enough to prove the negative aspect of such experience.[401]

At this juncture, it is important to make a differentiation between revelation and mysticism. Revelation, as in the case of miracles, visions, dreams is not a human initiative, at least theologically speaking (though lasting effects like the drenched fleece of Gideon warrant the theological standpoint), and so must not be labeled as mystic experience. However, mystic

---

[397] "Lysergic Acid Diethylamide," *Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia* (Microsoft Corporation, 2001)
[398] William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, p. 305
[399] *Ibid*, p. 324
[400] Vishal Mangalwadi, *The World of Gurus*, rev. edn. (Mumbai: GLS Publishing, 1999), p. 37
[401] *Ibid*, pp. 100-101

experiences originating in meditation and use of drugs may be easily explained as induced by some psychologically altered state due to stress, anxiety, or chemical imbalance in the body. Hallucinations can easily occur to physically ill, weak, or strained people. The ‘saintliness’ of a person, in addition, must not be taken as the standard of evaluating the genuineness of the experience. As was seen, William James saw that the mystic experience did have positive effects in the lives of the mystics; however, his conclusion was that the striking differences of mystics regarding theology, often out of their allegiance to diverse traditions, lends them no credulity for absolute truth. Their mystic experiences only possess pragmatic value that is ‘relatively in favor of all these things,’ i.e., their traditional religious suppositions. Thus, there are pantheist mystics, monist mystics, and monotheistic mystics all different from each other and proving that mysticism, originally, has no intellectual content. James also points out the existence of *diabolical* mysticism as witnessed in delusional insanity and paranoia. Thus, mysticism cannot be the source of absolute knowledge regarding either reality or divine reality. At the most, it is subjective, relative, diversified, and perhaps life-changing, yet devoid of genuine knowledge. Therefore, mysticism is unreliable.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it may be said that the different conceptions of divine reality as plural, immanent, finite, contingent, and mutable as witnessed in various degrees in animism, polytheism, pantheism, and panentheism are empirical inferences. David Hume has shown how empirical evidence from nature is more in favor of a finite God than an infinite deity. The apparent imperfection and disorder cannot be the work of an infinitely wise and powerful God unless He is also absolutely evil. The polytheistic division of gods and demons[402] is an answer to the many evils that humans go through in this life. The pantheistic view sees evil and good as part of the whole divine life. Panentheism tried to establish the changing and transforming nature of divine reality and failed in its enterprise in being unable to forge a relationship with the so called two poles of divine reality, one being transcendent and the other being immanent.

The case of logical positivism has also been seen. Its verification principle was the cause of its own defeat and unpopularity. As far as pragmatism is concerned, the theory of usefulness when applied to the concept of God becomes inadequate. The concept of God may be useful, say psychologically to soothe the mind, without God even existing. This is similar to elders educating children to obedience with tales of fairies and even demons. But, though useful, the tales are not necessarily true. Even so in the field of theology, pragmatism cannot be a reliable source of knowledge.

[402] Mythologically, gods and demons do not differ on the basis of moral virtues but on the basis of origin. A child of a demon is a demon and a child of a god is a god. It sometimes turns out that a demon is more virtuous than some gods.

The subjectivity of the mystical experience and its lack of original intellectual information regarding divine reality put mysticism in a doubtful color. Any person from any religious background can prove his/her belief-system to be true on the basis of the mystical experience. Paul had the vision of Jesus as the Messiah and Ramakrishna had the visions of many deities, including 'Jesus',[403] as diverse manifestations of the Absolute. *Pragmatically*, both their visions had effects on their lives. However, since both of their claims to knowledge of divine reality were strikingly dissimilar, either one of them or none of them can be logically considered to be true. However, if the mystic contends that the mystical knowledge transcends reason, as in yogic perception or Zen enlightenment, the mystic also has no right to claim absolute authority over his *theological belief*, even if validated by his mystic experience. For in that sense, he would be saying that his belief is true and the others are false: however, that cannot be said by transcending reason but only by submitting to the laws of reason. If, however, on the other hand, the mystic desists from speaking about the absolute by saying that the absolute is ineffable, then he is still to answer how the mystical experiences are so varied in from each other. For mysticism can only be a genuine way to an ineffable knowledge if the experiences match each other; however, the dissimilarities are more in favor of the conclusion that this ineffable experienced reality is only relatively true and not absolutely so.

Thus, it has been seen that the empirical notions of plurality (subject-object), finitude, immanence, contingency, and mutability are evidently seen in the empirical conclusions about divine reality. Though in pantheism, the divine is not seen as different deities yet, its assumption that all is divine attributes divinity to all things. Thus, God is pluralized through nature. Though, panentheism acknowledges the transcendence of God, having obviously learnt so from classical Christianity, its focusing on the changing nature of God in process reality, demonstrates its empirical tendencies. Consequently, God is considered to be not only the influencer of world processes but also to be affected by them, making Him again a contingent being. Evidences from spiritism and the occults show that some kind of experience may be behind the animistic beliefs in primal religions. However, it is highly possible that the spirits encountered in the occult may be deceiving people; and there is no empirical or rational way of evaluating the truthfulness of them. Therefore, occultic knowledge cannot be trusted.

Also, it is obvious that pure experience can, by itself, not give rise to certainty of knowledge. It can only, as David Hume noted, tell us that some impressions and ideas exist, and cannot with any certainty establish the certainty of an external world. In the previous, the Kantian approach to this problem was seen. Kant hypothesized that rational *a priori* knowledge in the mind dictated the way the impressions and ideas are understood from experience. However, his theory also ultimately led to agnosticism in relation to the knowledge of reality. Descartes, however, argued that empirical knowledge finds certainty of knowledge only on the basis of reason. For instance, a piece of wax that melts down and change is still understood as the same wax not

[403] Aleyamma Zachariah, *Modern Religious and Secular Movements in India* (Bangalore: TBT, 1992), pp. 80-81

empirically but rationally. For experience only gives us sensations and impressions of different pictures of the piece of wax. It is, however, reason that decides that the different pictures belong to the same thing.[404] Thus, pure experience itself, obviously cannot give rise to knowledge.

Finally, the nature of empirical knowledge as only probable, relative, subjective, and limited to the external and internal senses makes it not ultimately reliable. On the other hand, since divine reality is not encountered in the same manner that sense-objects of this-worldly-reality are encountered, it is difficult to say how empirical epistemics can provide a sure basis for any theology. Mysticism might be one answer, but its varied nature and flexibility with any theological stance leaves it no credibility. Thus, pure experience by itself cannot give rise to certainty of divine knowledge. Therefore, it may be concluded that empirical epistemics cannot be sure foundation, source, or means of the knowledge of divine reality.

[404] Velasquez, *Philosophy*, p. 293

Chapter 4

RATIONAL FIDEISM AND THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

This chapter aims to prove that rational fideism as the epistemics of both the subjective and objective dimensions of human existential and metaphysical cognition, and the harmonizing epistemics of the rational and empirical, is the best argued epistemics of divine reality. Faith, as significant in the cognitive process, has already received due consideration in the views of Existentialism, Neo-orthodoxy, Cognitive Voluntarism, and Foundationalism. In search of divine reality, rational fideism shows that it is by means of an existential and rational interpretation of divine Revelation that one can come to the knowledge of God.

In relation to the knowledge of divine reality, 'rational fideism' is the view that the knowledge of God can be certified through faith alone that is based on a revelation that is rationally verified. 'Fideism' is the view that truth in religion rests solely on faith and not on a reasoning process.[405] 'Rational fideism,' on the other hand, holds that truth in religion rests solely on faith; not blind faith, but faith that can give rational and cogent answers or reason to warrant the belief. This chapter will deal with the various epistemic theories, in relation to the knowledge of divine reality, that consider faith to be an indispensable part of the process of knowing. Five such theories, *viz.* Neo-Orthodoxy, Cognitive Voluntarism, Kierkegaardian Existentialism, Foundationalism, and Rational Belief of Richard Swinburne will be studied before forming the conclusion regarding the validity and significance of rational fideism as an epistemic way to divine knowledge. But before doing that the significance of revelation in divine epistemology and the relationship between faith and reason will be studied.

The Significance of Revelation in Divine Epistemics

As has been related earlier, in the Indian sub-continent the role of Scriptures as *Sabda Pramana*, i.e., verbal testimony was already recognized. Some, of course, regarded it as falling under inference since inference was seen to be involved in the process of interpreting Scriptures. However, its position as a distinct source of knowledge was recognized by the majority of the orthodox philosophical schools. It is indubitable that much of our knowledge regarding the universe doesn't come to us by means of either reason or experience but through testimony. We get the information of the world through parents, books, teachers, friends, relatives, media and many other ways. We respond to these by faith. It is another thing whether this faith is blind or evaluative. Thus, the importance of faith and verbal testimony or revelation cannot be disregarded in the event of knowing. In view of this, then, the revelation-theories of knowledge cannot be slightly waved off. The many values of revelation in the epistemic venture may be summarized as follows:

---

405 Geisler, *Christian Apologetics*, p. 47

Revelation as Hypothesis

Revelation can be regarded as a hypothesis from which reason can proceed on to draw certain verifiable conclusions. Reason by itself can draw no conclusions unless presented with some data. Reason can relate the hypotheses of revelation to available knowledge and, through the coherence and consistency tests, draw conclusions that can aid to form a holistic picture of the universe. The failure of the hypothesis can also be reason for investigating the reasons behind the failure. Hermeneutics, the science of interpretation, is an important part of this reasoning process. For how can anyone rightly infer anything from a premise which is either not-understood or misunderstood? Anyone who slights off revelation may be missing a key element in the epistemic structure of his inquiry. Therefore, the role of revelation as hypothesis cannot be disregarded.

Revelation as Treasured Truths

Revelation is often seen in the form of truths or beliefs treasured within certain traditions. The very quest for ultimate reality, the very metaphysical quest presupposes that this knowledge may be had. Thus, a metaphysician is not in a position to rule off revelation as incapable of possessing the answer; for if the people of the past did not know at least something of ultimate reality, what guarantees that the metaphysician himself will come to any knowledge of it at all? Perhaps by ignoring revelation one misses some very crucial link, clue, or information. Therefore, the consideration of revelation is of great value in an epistemic inquiry.

Revelation as Esoteric Aid

Obviously, revelation brings to us knowledge of a realm beyond the reach of pure reason and sense-experience, as has been earlier seen. In the critique of non-dualism, it has been pointed out that the failure to find any reason for supposing a Reality 'wholly other' to this reality led to the assumption that this-worldly-reality is all that reason has to deal with; thus, the passion for rationalizing reality led to attributing the rational attributes to this-worldly-reality at the disposal of phenomenal reality. In other words, a lack of information drove reason to believe a hypothesis that seemed to it the only possible one. Reason was hampered in its quest by the lack of any esoteric clue. The esoteric piece of information cannot be, therefore, disregarded. However, this doesn't mean that one assumes the position of rational irresponsibility and delinquency by heeding such esoteric testimony. It is vitally important to investigate the source and origin of such esoteric information and the relation thereof to the body of established knowledge. Revelation must, then, be seen as something which aids reason where it comes to a loss of data. However, it is reason that decides whether the present source of the esoteric data is reliable or unreliable.

Consequently, theological considerations regarding the epistemics of divine reality, as in neo-orthodoxy, cannot be regarded as philosophically useless. Interpretations of Scriptures can serve as data or hypothesis to aid in the epistemic inquiry regarding divine reality. However, in the end it is the results of the philosophical treatment of the subject that can be acceptable as philosophically justifiable. Faith, without reference to reasoning, has nothing in common to do with philosophy. However, faith that seeks understanding through reason finds a good associate in philosophy.

Relationship between Revelation and Reason

The relationship between revelation and reason has been a major concern in the field of divine epistemics. The word 'faith' has two meanings: as an act, it means believing or trusting in something or someone; as an object of such an act, it means the body of knowledge passed on through tradition or interpreted revelation in the form of some creed, or revelation itself. The former is subjective and the latter objective. Since the latter forms a system, it needs to be evaluated in order for it to constitute the reasonability on which faith can act. One question to ask is, 'Is revealed truth above, equal, or below rational truths?' As far as the faith-as-act connection with reason is concerned, it is obvious that the act of faith is integral to reason; for if one doesn't believe reason, one cannot come to any knowledge at all; but in order to even know that one believes that he does not believe reason, he must use reason to believe so to be true and its opposite to be false, i.e., by the use of the law of non-contradiction. But since this is impossible, it is certain that the act of faith is integral to the reasoning process that is based on rational principles.

With reference to revelation, at least three kinds of relation between revelation and reason may be pointed out, *viz.* that of revelation above reason, of revelation equal to reason, and of reason above revelation. Since these views mainly originated among Christian theologians and philosophers, the faith often mentioned here is of the Christian revelation in the Bible. Each of these relations will be studied and analyzed in this section to unravel the truth regarding the same.

Revelation above Reason

This was the view of the Scholastics following the path of St. Thomas Aquinas (1224-1274), and is also affirmed in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. According to Aquinas, revelation and reason cannot contradict each other for at least two reasons. Firstly, *only falsehood can contradict truth.* Accordingly, since by definition truth is only opposed to falsehood, the truth of revelation can only contradict the principles of reason by being itself false. Therefore, it is imperative for the truthfulness of revelation that it should not contradict reason.[406] Secondly,

[406] Peter Kreeft and Ronald Tacelli, *Handbook of Christian Apologetics* (Crowborough: Monarch, 1994), p. 38

God is the teacher in both. According to Aquinas, the principles of reason are implanted by God in the human mind to facilitate understanding and, therefore, cannot be opposed to divine Wisdom, which is the source of all understanding. Therefore, that 'which we hold by faith as divinely revealed, cannot be contrary to our natural knowledge.'[407]

However, though revelation is not contradictory to reason, it is above reason. Revelation and science are not about the same things; for the object of science is something seen, whereas the object of faith is the unseen.[408] Secondly, the inquiry of natural reason does not suffice mankind for the knowledge of divine truths.[409] In other words, reason is incapable of itself to discover some divine truths that can only be known by revelation. Therefore, revelation is above reason though not contrary to it. Further, revelation is above reason just because it derives its authority from God himself. Thus, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* says, 'What moves us to believe is not the fact that revealed truths appear as true and intelligible in the light of our natural reason: we believe "because of the authority of God himself who reveals them, who can neither deceive nor be deceived."'[410] However, since this can lead to several diverse claims to revelation, the importance and necessity of external proofs as additional aids to faith has been affirmed.

> So "that the submission of our faith might nevertheless be in accordance with reason, God willed that external proofs of his Revelation should be joined to the internal helps of the Holy Spirit." Thus the miracles of Christ and the saints, prophecies, the Church's growth and holiness, and her fruitfulness and stability "are the most certain signs of divine Revelation, adapted to the intelligence of all"; they are "motives of credibility" *(motive credibilitatis),* which show that the assent of faith is "by no means a blind impulse of the mind."[411]

Thus, though revelation is above reason it has been proved to be not contrary to reason. The *Catechism*, quoting several writings affirms this positive relationship between revelation and reason as follows:

> *Faith and science:* "Though faith is above reason, there can never be any real discrepancy between faith and reason. Since the same God who reveals mysteries and infuses faith has bestowed the light of reason on the human mind, God cannot deny himself, nor can truth ever contradict truth." "Consequently, methodical research in all branches of knowledge, provided it is carried out in a truly scientific manner and does

---

[407] *Ibid*, p. 39
[408] St. Thomas Aquinas, "Faith and Reason," *Philosophy of Religion* 2nd edn. (ed. John Hick; Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1970), p.58
[409] *Ibid*, p. 60
[410] *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (New York: Image, Doubleday, 1995), p. 48
[411] *Catechism*, p. 48

> not override moral laws, can never conflict with the faith, because the things of the world and the things of faith derive from the same God…"[412]

As contended then, since both revelation (faith) and science derive from the same God, and God cannot deny himself, therefore, revelation and science can never be in contradiction to each other. However, since revelation gives knowledge of higher truths of divine reality that are unreachable by reason, and revelation is directly attested by God through miracles and other proofs, revelation is above reason.

Revelation in par with Reason

The adherents of this view contend that if revelation is rational, it must be capable of being deduced in its entirety by reason. Consequently, every aspect of revelation, every item of Christian belief, could be shown to derive from reason.[413] According to this view then, 'Revelation' is simply a re-publication or reaffirmation of moral truths already available to enlightened reason.[414] Revelation, consequently, gave no new truth that could not be known by reason. In fact, revelation only reconfirmed what could be known through rational reflection on nature. If by 'revelation' is meant Christian revelation, then this view, has been already proven to be wrong here: for both reason and experience without the aid of revelation have been seen to be leading to contrary results about divine reality. Reason has been seen to have necessarily led to monism in order to maintain the necessary, infinite, and immutable nature of rational reality; though this has been at the expense of rejecting as false all phenomena. On the other hand, experience led to different views that agreed on the immanence, mutability, and contingency of empirical reality; while at the same time denying any metaphysical absolutes. Thus, evidently the propositions of revelation are not perfectly compatible with the results of either rational or empirical epistemics.

However, 'revelation in par with reason' can be a favorable hypothesis for the *advaitic* approach of the *Gaudapada's Karika,* as has already been seen in the second chapter. For it has been seen that the Upanishads proclaim what *Gaudapada* has also proven on the basis of reason. Thus, revelation is seen to be in par with reason. However, in this case, it has also been shown that the results of reason were nothing but a reflection of itself; and that having arisen to heights where all empirical attachments were shaken off, reason was left with nothing but its own categories and principles to cogitate on; consequently, infinity, transcendence, immutability, and unity were attributed to reality which was nothing but reason itself. This kind of epistemics, therefore, was rejected as inadequate and incapable of explaining sufficiently the 'why' and 'how' of the pluralistic and changing phenomena witnessed by all humans. Thus, the *non-dualism* of the

[412] *Catechism*, p. 49
[413] Alister E. McGrath, *Christian Theology,* 2nd edn. (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 1996), p. 214
[414] Alister E. McGrath, *The Making of Modern German Christology 1750-1990* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1994), p. 20

Upanishads cannot be considered to be genuine revelation at all. It reveals nothing about reality and divine reality; it only reiterates the rational attributes of truth. However, if there were any revelation, that revelation must be above reason, in the sense that reason by itself or by recourse to nature cannot reach to the revealed truths. Therefore, it may be concluded that revelation is not in par with reason.

Reason above Revelation

According to this view reason is considered to be the judge to whom revelation must submit for verification. This view of Enlightenment rationalism ridiculed every tenet of faith that appeared to be irrational. Reason came to be regarded as above revelation.[415] Accordingly, the claims of revelation must not contradict with the results of reason and the religion of nature. Consequently, as Prideux, the Dean of Norwich said in his *Letter to the Deists (1748)*, if what was written in the Bible were tried by the touchstone of all religions, *viz.*, 'religion of nature and reason which God has written in the hearts of every one' from the first creation; 'and if it varies from it in any one particular, if it prescribes any one thing which may in the minutest circumstances thereof be contrary to its righteousness,' then this would constitute an argument against Christianity, to the effect of rendering all efforts to support it ineffectual.[416] Thus, reason was considered to be the sole authority over revelation.

Critics, however, have pointed out the inadequacy of reason to extend its monopoly of judgment over every field of knowledge. For instance, the limitations of rationalism have been recently discovered not only in philosophy and theology but also in mathematics. While once mathematical truths were considered to possess an absolute degree of certainty, now the very notion of mathematical truth has become questionable.[417] According to L. E. J. Brouwer, for instance, the law of excluded middle holds considering only finite objects; however, such rigidity cannot be maintained when moving into the infinitary.[418] He concluded that the codification of such logic laws must follow and not precede the development of mathematics.

The authority of reason has not been acknowledged universally. Reformed theologians, for instance, reject the ability of reason to recognize, far be it judge, divine truths. According to them, reason has become so corrupted and crippled by the depravity of sin that its highest imaginations are far below the sacred truths of revelation, and reason is not in a position to recognize these truths (again, far be it judge) unless it is first sanctified and illuminated by the work of the Holy Spirit. Apostle Paul wrote that the natural man (*psuchikos* in Greek referring to

---

415 Alister E. McGrath, *The Making of Modern German Christology 1750-1990*, p. 21
416 J. Leslie Dunstan (ed.), *Protestantism* (New York: George Braziller, 1962), p. 106
417 Hans Küng, *Does God Exist?* p. 31
418 Dr. Carl Posy, *Philosophy of Mathematics*, Class Notes (Duke University, Fall 1992; http://www.cs.washington.edu/homes/gjb/doc/philmath.htm)

the man who relied on natural reason alone) cannot grasp the spiritual truths of God.[419] In this sense, then, reason has no authority over revelation.

The revolt against reason's claim to supremacy is also clearly evident in the history of philosophy. Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778), for instance, insisted on the superiority of feeling to intellect. He argued that though reason might be against belief in God and immortality, feeling was overwhelmingly in their favor. Consequently, he asked, why should we not trust in instinct here, rather than yield to the despair of an arid skepticism?[420] Thus, rationalism's failure to find universal acceptance is a point disfavoring its claim of superiority.

It has also been shown that reason devoid of synthetic data is incapable of itself in acquiring knowledge. In this sense, then though reason may function as the faculty of understanding, it cannot claim superiority over anything on which it itself is dependent. Consequently, reason cannot be considered to be superior to either experience or verbal testimony. However, is it right to say that reason is judge of experience and verbal testimony (revelation, be it divine or non-divine)? The answer is that reason by itself cannot be a judge; it must be supplied with data on the basis of which it makes judgments. For instance, reason needs the premises 'All men are mortal' and 'Socrates is a man' to form the conclusion 'Therefore, Socrates is mortal.' In addition, reason must be cognizant of the meaning of the terms being used. Thus, reason is highly dependent on experience and verbal testimony for data on the basis of which it draws inferences, though in accordance to its principles. However, most principles like mathematical formulas and scientific laws are derived from experience and are not *a priori* givens.

Overall, reason is in need of faith and revelation in order to reach to any conclusion. First of all, it has to believe in itself. Secondly, it has to believe the genuineness of the observations it makes and the genuineness of the information it receives in order to draw any further conclusions. In other words, reason builds upon faith by faith. Thus, reason is not above faith but to a great extent based upon faith. As a matter of fact, reason needs faith even as faith needs reason in order to arrive at any understandable knowledge. Reason may be described as the eyes by which faith sees and understands. Faith, on the other hand, may be described as the ground of all knowledge. It is the 'substance of things hoped for'.[421] In other words, it is the undergirding volitional and foundational thrust, that manifesting itself in curiosity, anxiety, and desire, compels reason towards knowledge. Its curiosity, anxiety, and desire are prompted by that towards which its hope is set. In that sense, faith is positive while doubt is negative. Thus, it is the ground of things hoped for. In relation to divine reality, the Ultimate Depth of Being, God is the Object of the soul's hope; and faith functions as the underlying, innate thrust that not only seeks the knowledge of God but recognizes the truth as satisfactory (since it is the substance of

[419] I Corinthians 2: 14
[420] Will Durant, *The Story of Philosophy*, pp. 259-260
[421] Hebrews 11:1 (KJV)

it) as soon as offered to it in revelation (direct or testimonial). This view of faith and reason will be presented in more detail in the final section of this chapter.

The next section will be a survey of some views regarding the joint venture of reason and faith in the epistemic attempt to know divine reality.

Views on the Rationality and Practicality of Faith

Several views opposing the tyranny of reason and upholding the reasonability of faith arose in the past two centuries in response to the deterministic and arid nature of rationalism, on one hand, and the skeptical and relativistic results of empiricism, on the other hand. Among theologians and philosophers of religion, however, the responses were more prompted by the inability of reason and experience to come to any certainty of the knowledge of God. On the other hand, the results of reason and experience seemed to point more in the direction away from God, towards agnosticism and skepticism. Religion and religious beliefs came under attack as a result. Miracles had been discounted. Sacred histories were declared mythological and the authority of revelation was questioned. Consequently, the existence and authority of religion was threatened. The implications could be drastic: lack of moral motivation, breakup of authoritative traditions, families, and several social chaos. The dawning of the First World War proved that reason was not at all successful. The need for the re-establishment of religion intensified the already existent urge for the sacred knowledge. Prior to the War, Kierkegaard and others had already dealt with the concept of an *irrational* but *unavoidable* faith that provided life with meaning (the substance of things hoped for). This movement gathered powerful impetus after the War with the rise of the neo-orthodox movement around the theological thought of Karl Barth (1886-1968), one of the most significant theologians of the twentieth century. His re-echoing of the Reformation call for *sola fide* (faith alone) was taken up by many of his contemporaries and followers. In decades following, philosophers have devised theories that attempt to prove the justifiability of faith. This section surveys few of such theories beginning with Kierkegaardian existentialism that find in rational faith a significant source of knowledge about divine reality.

Kierkegaardian Existentialism

An outline of Kierkegaard's early life is important in order to appraise the significance of his existential epistemology. Søren Aabey Keirkegaard was born in 1813 at Copenhagen in Denmark. His father was a well-to-do, religious, Lutheran businessman. Kierkegaard had a great respect for him. However, he was greatly shocked by the strong element of formalism in the Lutheran Danish State Church of his day. He studied theology and philosophy at the University of Copenhagen. However, he was most of the time stricken with feelings of sadness and

penitence.[422] In 1835, he experienced what he called 'the great earthquake', of a questioning related to God that began plaguing his mind. The books that flowed from his pen during that year bore the marks of a brilliant, but tortured, mind, the mind that was cynical about the world, human behavior, and philosophical orthodoxy, alias Hegelianism, which to him had nothing significant in relation to the reality of human existence.[423] It was in 1836 that, on the brink of suicide, Kierkegaard experienced the first of several religious encounters which produced a powerful moral transformation in his life. In 1838, he had another religious experience that led him toward a greater Christian commitment.[424] In 1848, he underwent an experience of conversion that made him write that his whole being had changed and that 'forgiveness of sins means to believe that here in time the sin is forgotten by God, that it is really true that God forgets.'[425] Thus, a powerful history of religious experience can be found in the life of Kierkegaard that, obviously, formed the background for the development of his existentialism.

In his *Philosophical Fragments* (1844), Kierkegaard asks the question "But what is this unknown something with which the Reason collides when inspired by its paradoxical passion, with the result of unsettling even man's knowledge of himself?' He responds with the answer, 'It is the Unknown….*God.'*[426] The inspiration towards this Unknown is the 'paradoxical passion' of reason itself, according to Kierkegaard. However, paradoxically this Unknown cannot be known by reason. The paradox is there because reason has a limit beyond which it cannot go, but the Unknown is the different, the absolutely different. This limit is 'precisely a torment for passion, though it also serves as an incitement.' 'And yet the Reason can come no further, whether it risks an issue *via negationis* or *via eminentia*.'[427] In other words, the ultimate that Reason can attempt is to make negative statements about God or attribute human qualities to God in a higher degree; yet, it collides with the boundary of the Unknown, beyond which it cannot go. Reason cannot transcend itself. It cannot know the Unknown. Evidently, as seen in the previous chapters, the inability to go beyond leads towards either the soliloquy of rational monism or the aesthetic of empirical pluralism. Reason rebounds on itself at the collision point with the Unknown (as in monism) or gives way to empirical projectionism (as in polytheism and pantheism). However, the demands of passion are not satisfied and God is still as far away as ever. Passion is the highest expression of subjectivity. The absurdity and disorder manifest in the world of

[422] Josh McDowell and Don Steward, *Concise Guide to Today's Religions* (Bucks: Scripture Press, 1990), pp. 460-461

[423] Colin Brown, *Philosophy & the Christian Faith* (Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1968), pp. 126, 127

[424] McDowell and Steward, *Concise Guide*, p. 461

[425] Colin Brown, *Philosophy & the Christian Faith*, p. 126

[426] Søren Kierkegaard, "Against Proofs in Religion", *Philosophy of Religion*, 2nd edn. (ed. John Hick; Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1970), p.175

[427] *Ibid*, p. 178

experience produces objective uncertainty. This objective uncertainty 'increases the tension of that infinite passion which constitutes his [the existential man's] inwardness.'[428]

Faith thus comes in at the tension as the contradiction between the infinite passion and the objective uncertainty. Faith is precisely 'the contradiction between the infinite passion of the individual's inwardness and the objective uncertainty.'[429] For once the objective is realized, known, there is no longer faith. But the infinite passion is not satisfied by such concept of the Unknown. Therefore, one cannot proceed to know God on the basis of reason, but only by faith. God's existence must be presupposed for any meaningful theological enquiry.

According to Kierkegaard, the rational attempts of arriving at certainty of knowledge regarding God are futile, since the method of arguing toward existence, rather than from existence, is wrong. One must argue from existence, and not toward existence. He says, 'I do not, for example, prove that a stone exists, but that some existing thing is a stone.'[430] Similarly, 'The procedure in a court of justice does not prove that a criminal exists, but that the accused, whose existence is given, is a criminal.' Therefore, it is improper to proceed from effects, say, 'deeds of Napolean,' towards the existence of a *specific* cause, say, 'Napolean'. For since 'Napoleon is only an individual, and insofar there exists no absolute relationship between him and his deeds; some other person might have performed the same deeds.'[431] Similarly, it is impossible to argue toward God's existence from nature. Thus, the cosmological and the teleological arguments are in reality no proofs. For, when looking at nature, are 'we not confronted with the most terrible temptations to doubt, and is it not impossible finally to dispose of all these doubts?' he asks rhetorically. And so he concludes, 'But from such an order of things I will surely not attempt to prove God's existence; and even if I began I would never finish, and would in addition have to live constantly in suspense, lest something so terrible should suddenly happen that my bit of proof would be demolished.'[432] Thus, one cannot arrive at a certainty of the knowledge of God by arguing toward His existence.

On the other hand, faith is the leap by which one lets go the proof in order that the existence be there. In other words, as long as one keeps trying to prove that God exists, the existence does not come out, if for no other reason than that he is engaged in proving it. However, once one lets the proof go, the existence is there. Thus, by faith one presupposes the existence of God and proceeds from this knowledge. The existence of God cannot be proved but is presupposed in religious knowledge. Anyone who tries to prove God's existence has already presupposed it.

[428] Søren Kierkegaard, "Truth and Subjectivity," *Issues in Religion*, 2nd edn. (ed. Allie M. Frazier; California: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1975), pp. 332-333

[429] *Ibid*, p. 333

[430] Søren Kierkegaard, "Against Proofs in Religion", *Philosophy of Religion*, 2nd edn. (ed. John Hick; Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1970), p. 176

[431] *Ibid*, p. 176

[432] *Ibid*, pp. 176-177

Consequently, the cosmological and teleological proofs advanced by religious people actually proceed from their confidence in God's existence and reckoning of creation as a work of God. Thus, Kierkegaard writes:

> …The idea of demonstrating that this unknown something (God) exists could scarcely suggest itself to the Reason. For if God does not exist it would of course be impossible to prove it; and if he does exist it would be folly to attempt it. For at the very outset, in beginning my proof, I will have presupposed it, not as doubtful but as certain (a presupposition is never doubtful, for the very reason that it is a presupposition), since other wise I would not begin, readily understanding that the whole would be impossible if he did not exist. But if when I speak of proving God's existence I mean that I propose to prove that the Unknown, which exists, is God, then I express myself unfortunately. For in that case I do not prove anything, least of all an existence, but merely develop the content of a conception.[433]

Thus, for Kierkegaard the knowledge of God cannot be the result of reasoning. The existence of God precedes all reasoning. If he doesn't exist all reasoning about him is futile. Faith in God, obviously then, will precede all cogitations on his works as his works.

Consequently, the subjective becomes important in Kierkegaard's epistemology. His rejection of Hegelianism was also, therefore, on grounds that Hegel's philosophy falsified man's understanding of reality because it shifted attention away from the concrete individual to the concept of universals.[434] Thus, objective truth can never mean anything unless it means something subjectively and significantly to the individual. An abstract God has no meaning to the individual. 'The only salvation is subjectivity, *i.e.* God, as infinite compelling subjectivity.'[435] Faith is 'the contradiction between the individual's inwardness and the objective uncertainty.'[436] Thus, the infinite passion within and, in relation to it, the subjective significance of truth, along with objective uncertainty and the concept of the Unknown (God) is the framework in which Kierkegaardian existentialism finds meaning and solution to the problems of life, not on the basis of reason but through the leap of faith. This leap of faith is based on the intellect but on the will, the choice of the will. It is a huge risk. It is a 'leap of faith.' To Kierkegaard, gathering evidences and believing then and living is not faith; on the other hand, believing and then living is faith and a person's life is the proof that he believes.[437]

To Kierkegaard, moreover, absurdity or irrationality is integral to faith. Of course, he had in mind Christian beliefs like that of trinity, incarnation, atonement, etc. To Kierkegaard, such

---

[433] *Ibid*, p. 175
[434] Stumpf, *Socrates to Sartre*, p. 477
[435] Colin Brown, *Philosophy & the Christian Faith*, p. 128
[436] As cited in "Faith and Reason", (http://www3.baylor.edu/~Scott_Moore/handouts/faith_reason.html)
[437] Colin Chapman, *The Case for Christianity* (Lion Publishing, 1981), pp. 169-170

religious beliefs are an offence to the reason. Subjectivity, inwardness, he says, is the truth. And when subjectivity, inwardness, is the truth, then 'truth becomes objectively a paradox; and the fact that the truth is objectively a paradox shows in its turn that subjectivity is truth.'[438] It seems that the prior commitment to faith (Kierkegaard was a Christian before he was a philosopher) and then the discovery of seeming absurdity of the faith, and yet the anxiety of losing meaning by renouncing the absurd, had led him to the notion of absurd and yet meaningful faith. However, laying aside religious faith, if faith implies belief in the absurd, then Kierkegaard's proposition itself must be absurd in order to be believable, which becomes cyclical. However, Kierkegaard must not be so *rationally* analyzed. And, obviously, the *absurd* in Kierkegaard does not necessarily mean *below* reason. It only means that faith *transcends* reason. It must be noted that existential meaning is paramount for Kierkegaard. Thus, though the notions of Divine love, the Incarnation, and the atonement appear to be absurd, they are only absurd since reason is not able to explain why the Divine can be compelled by something like love, or how the Immutable Deity could assume finite humanity, or how the death of Jesus could atone for the sins of the world. Further, these could never have been themes suggested by reason; reason did not discover them. But the relative inability of reason to either discover or explain such themes cannot be considered reason for abandoning faith. The inner longing for God, the anxiety of sin, the dread of the future, to sum it up, the existential hunger can only be relieved by that which seems to be absurd. And therefore, the believer is justified in taking that leap of faith by thrust of his will in order to make sense of his existence.

Critique of Kierkegaardian Existentialism

Kierkegaard's view of truth as subjectivity is a powerful theme. For truth can never be personal unless it accosts a person. However, this over-emphasis on subjectivity can be at the expense of the objective dimension of truth. Consequently, feelings and not reason can become the criterion of 'meaningfulness'. To compensate for this, therefore, Kierkegaard should have related this concept of the subjective meaningfulness of truth with the objective meaningfulness of truth.

Further, Kierkegaard's insistence on arguing from God's existence and not towards God's existence possess some problems. For he says, 'I do not…prove that a stone exists, but that some existing thing is a stone.' However, when it comes to enquiry about God, the existence of God is not given in the same way as that of a stone. One doesn't experience the phenomenon and then argues that that phenomenon is God. Therefore, one cannot proceed on the enquiry of God from His existence in the same manner that one proceeds on the enquiry about a stone. But, Kierkegaard's method of proceeding from existence rather than towards existence cannot be simply rejected in that manner for the following reasons:

[438] Kierkegaard, "Truth and Subjectivity," p. 333

1. One cannot even prove that a stone exists on the basis of pure reason or experience unless he first knows what is meant by a stone. Thus, pre-understanding defines the nature of the enquiry. Unless one knows what one is in search for, one cannot know that he has found it when it is found. Thus, Kierkegaard is right when he says that a presupposition of God is involved in all the arguments for the existence of God. The pre-understanding of God, grounded in faith, defines the nature of enquiry. Thus, one gets what one looks for and, therefore, all arguments towards existence are useless.
2. Subsequently, it may be argued that faith in God based on a pre-understanding (revelation) of who He is precedes and defines all theological enquiry. A similar view is espoused by Karl Barth regarding the theological methodology of St. Anselm, for whom, says Barth, 'the aim of theology cannot be to lead men to faith, nor to confirm them in the faith, nor even to deliver their faith from doubt.'439 Thus, faith comes first followed by reasoning which, in reality, seeks to understand and not to confirm faith.
3. For Kierkegaard, the ultimate that reason can do is to take one closer to the Unknown. It seems that one is near only to find that the Unknown has regressed farther. Thus, reason is seen to suffer from self-deception. Suffering, the passional frustration of being unable to know the Unknown, it may not be surprising then that imagination can supply a whole lot of concepts that can be projected on to the Unknown as in paganism.440 Consequently, such a God would not be the God who is really there, but a god invented by man. Therefore, it is imperative that the concept of 'God' must be clear even before one ventures into an enquiry of it.

Thus, according to Kierkegaard, the knowledge of God is not based on either reason or experience, but on an appropriation of God in His revelation of Himself by faith. This faith in God, then constitutes the meaningfulness of the theological enquiry.

Neo-orthodoxy

The neo-orthodoxy movement is associated with the Swiss theologian Karl Barth (1886-1968). Another important thinker in this movement was Emil Brunner (1889-1966). Karl Barth contended that knowledge of God cannot come from reason or experience but only through revelation. Re-echoing the *Sola Fide* of the Reformation, Barth insists that our faith depends on a constant action on God's part, and for this action there does not seem to be any proof.[441] The possibility of our knowledge of God is primarily a function of the readiness of God Himself. The certainty of divine knowledge is grounded on the character of God Himself who in His revelation

[439] Karl Barth, *Anselm: Fides Quaerens Intellectum* (tr. Ian W. Robertson; Cleveland: Meridian Books, 1962), p. 17
[440] Søren Kierkegaard, "Against Proofs in Religion", *Philosophy of Religion,* 2nd edn. (ed. John Hick; Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1970), p.179
[441] Sebastian A. Matczak, *Karl Barth on God: The Knowledge of Divine Existence* (New York: St. Paul Publications, 1962), p. 95

is its guarantee.[442]

In his *Evangelical Theology: An Introduction (1963)*, Karl Barth attempts to trace the existential foundations of theological existence. Eventually, he underscores four things, *viz*. wonder, concern, commitment, and faith as the 'existentials'[443] of, what he calls, evangelical theology.

'Wonder' is integral to theology. Thus, it not only is at the beginning of the theological undertaking but is also throughout the theologizing process. Wonder is not only at the beginning of the inquiry but also at the root of every theological word.[444] Theological wonder is infinite in the sense that a theologian is never able to finish his lessons. Theology can never exhaust itself. The 'wholly other' God, as the object of theology, is beyond its reach and, therefore, wonder is integral to the theological enterprise.

'Concern' arises out of wonderment. Theology involves a person. A person cannot be detached from theology and still be a theologian. As soon as one is encountered by the object of theology, he is not only surprised but also captured by it.[445] A man who is confronted with Revelation (the Word of God) cannot suppress it.[446]

'Commitment' is inevitable since the concern with theology involves responsibility. This commitment is not a compulsion or a burden. Unless one is committed one cannot even enter the reality of the theologizing process. The theological object has an internal order which the theologian must recognize. Theological commitment is the commitment to pursue the law of theological knowledge itself, and not the spirit of the age.[447] In other words, theology has a law that may strikingly differ from the laws of secular reason or science. To state it in Wittgenstein's terms, theology has its own form of life, and a theologian can never be satisfied until he is thoroughly committed to this form of life. His failure in doing so proves fatal to the theological task. Thus, in order to know divine truths, one must commit himself to the form of life dictated by Revelation. Such a commitment alone brings theological contentment and satisfaction. If one attempts to know the truth of divine reality in the same way that one investigates in the secular sciences, he is soon to be disappointed. Reason or even experience cannot be the source or condition of the knowledge of divine reality.

'Faith' is the *condition sine qua non*, the indispensable condition of theological science.[448] Faith is not the object of theology. Therefore, theology cannot be a completed system. Faith is not a credo in the sense of the Credo of the Church. Revelation is not about creeds but of God Himself. One is not called to confess the faith of the Church but called to believe and confess God

[442] *Ibid*, pp. 99-100
[443] Karl Barth, *Evangelical Theology: An Introduction* (tr. Grover Foley; Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1963), p.63
[444] *Ibid*, p. 64

Himself.[449] Thus, faith is not objective but subjective. Faith is the event and history without which no one can become a theologian.[450] It is at the root of theological wonder, concern, and commitment. In Barth's own words,

> Faith is the special event that is constitutive for both Christian and theological existence. Faith is the event by which the wonderment, concern, and commitment that make the theologian a theologian are distinguished form all other occurrences which, in their own way, might be noteworthy and memorable or might be given the same designation.[451]

Thus, according to Barth, faith is the indispensable condition of theology. It means that one cannot know divine reality except by participating in the form of life with which Revelation confronts him. Before one is confronted by Revelation, the divine initiative of grace, one is incapable of even knowing what divine reality is all about. Being confronted with the Revelation of God Himself (not creeds), one is struck with wonder, which then becomes integral to the whole theological task with which one inevitably becomes concerned. Obviously, since divine reality is altogether different from phenomenal reality, the wonder is only heightened and theology becomes dynamic, but must not be boxed into a system. Commitment to the form of life that Revelation confronts one with is crucial to the possibility of a living theology. Reason and scientific investigation may only stifle the task. Faith is the indispensable condition of theological existence. Faith is the event of participation in the form of life presented by Revelation. Thus, it is by faith in relation to the Divine encounter in Revelation that one can ever know anything about divine reality.

The form of theological life that Barth talks about, as has been seen, is quite distinct from the naturalistic world-views of secular sciences. One who seeks to know God must adopt the biblical thought form or perspective. This attitude is

> …the mind-set of the prophets and apostles. It is not the attitude of observers…nor of philosophers, but that of witnesses, of people who, whatever else they may be, speak as those who are grounded in the reality of the 'and God spake' as an absolute presupposition.[452]

---

[445] *Ibid*, p. 76
[446] *Ibid*, p. 78
[447] *Ibid*, p. 91
[448] *Ibid*, p. 100
[449] *Ibid*, p. 99
[450] *Ibid*, p. 100
[451] *Ibid*, p. 100
[452] As cited by David L. Mueller, *Karl Barth* (Texas: Word Books, Publisher, 1972), p. 36

Barth attributes the complete control over theological understanding to the Revelation, the Word of God. Unless the Word dominates, the philosophical and other elements utilized by the theologian will lack a center. The Revelation, however, according to Barth is actually in the person of Jesus Christ and, therefore, a theology that is Christo-centric is the only rightful theology.

Consequently, Barth rejects natural theology. In fact, he condemns all possibility of a natural theology as demonic. In his view, 'Only the theology and the church of the antichrist can profit from it'; the 'Evangelical Church and Evangelical Theology would only sicken and die of it.'[453]

Barth differentiates between anthropocentric theology and Christocentric theology. According to him, 'liberalism', 'Cartesianism', 'neo-Protestantism', and 'modernism', or 'anthropological theology' are terms that refer to the modern theological tradition in which man is the 'centre and measure and goal of all things.'[454] They are theologies that proceed from man towards God. According to him this kind of theologizing finds its classical expression in Descartes, who based the certainty of the existence of God on man's certainty of his own existence. Such an anthropological approach only leads to the rejection of Revelation and the enthronement of the human intellect or experience as evidenced in modernism and liberalism. On the other hand, the presumption of the Roman Catholic Church as sole interpreter of the Bible and its concept of revelation as static deposit of truth over which it has authority is a usurpation of the central position of Christ in theology. Christ is the objective revelation of God. Revelation is something that *happens,* not something that *is.*[455]

Knowledge of divine reality is in reality not a human initiative; it is the result of the operation of the Holy Spirit in one's life who enlightens the person to knowledge of God's Word.[456] The Holy Spirit is the subjective reality of revelation. Faith is the result of God's work in a man's heart through the Holy Spirit. Thus, the knowledge of God, for Barth, is only possible through an encounter with the living God who reveals Himself through Scripture, preaching, and sacrament, which testify of Christ, the objective reality of revelation.

Brunner questions this view of Barth's downright rejection of natural theology. According to him,

[453] Emil Brunner and Karl Barth, *Natural Theology* (London: Geoffrey Bles: The Centenary Press, 1946), p. 128
[454] Mueller, *Karl Barth*, p. 51
[455] Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1985), p. 185
[456] Mueller, *Karl Barth*, p. 79

> Wherever God does anything, he leaves the imprint of his nature upon what he does. Therefore, the creation of the world is at the same time a revelation, a self-communication of God.[457]

However, this general revelation of God is, according to him, suppressed by sinful man, 'so that the revelation which God gives him for knowledge of Himself becomes the source of the vanity of idolatry.'[458] Though, general revelation is a reality, natural theology is impossible because man's intellectual faculty is corrupted by sin. This cognitive significance of sin, as recognized by the Reformers, is the fact that sin prevents the knowledge of God. Therefore, general revelation is ineffective to salvation. Idolatry is itself proof that general revelation exists and that it is not effective to salvation.

> Hence there are two things to be said about man's "natural knowledge of God": It would not be what it is were it not for the revelation in the Creation; it would not be what it is apart from sin. There is no idolatry apart from a knowledge of God; there is no religion outside the Bible that does not distort man's knowledge of God.[459]

Thus, concludes Brunner, the natural man is not able to *see* God's revelation, since he is blinded by sin. Only the man 'whose eyes have been opened by the particular historical Word of God is now once more able to see what God shows us in His revelation in the Creation.'[460]

Thus, to both Barth and Brunner, the *unsaved, unregenerated,* and *sinful* philosopher, who has never been confronted with the revelation of God in Jesus Christ as communicated through the Scriptures or preaching, and thus whose eyes are blind, is in no way able to know anything about God by use of reason alone or by recourse to the world of experience. Faith in some creed alone is not what is meant; such faith only shows an 'I-It' relationship.[461] Faith has as its object the living God revealed in Jesus Christ; such faith is what constitutes the 'I-Thou' relationship after which a man never remains the same.[462]

Critique of Neo-Orthodoxy

The neo-orthodox view of divine knowledge only after regeneration, however, implies that those who have no access to this *Christian* data are lost without hope. Thus, all adherents of non-Christian religions have no true knowledge of God at all. Only if they are regenerated can they

[457] Brunner & Barth, *Natural Theology*, p. 25
[458] Emil Brunner, *Revelation and Reason* (tr. Olive Wyon; Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1946), p. 65
[459] *Ibid*, p. 74
[460] *Ibid*, p. 76
[461] Even the Scriptures themselves cannot be the object of faith; the Bible as written by humans cannot be error free or infallible, though in its proclamation one can encounter the living Word of God.
[462] Emil Brunner, *The Divine-Human Encounter* (tr. Amandus W. Loos; Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1943), pp. 84-88

ever come closer to the knowledge of God. Any religion, for Barth, is unbelief; it 'is the one great concern…of godless man.'[463] The revelation of God contradicts, abolishes and displaces religion. Thus, Christian missionaries can never find in other religions a point of contact. This view, however, has many defects.

1. Scriptural affirmations of the possibility of divine knowledge outside the covenant community declare that divine knowledge is possible apart from a Christian proclamation. Though it is evident that reason by itself cannot come to such knowledge, it is not unscriptural to suppose that God communicated with people of different cultures all over the world. For instance, Melchizedek was neither a Jew nor Christian but was called the priest of the most high God.[464] The case of Balaam in Numbers 22-24 may also be cited. Paul quotes Epimenides as a prophet in Acts 17:28 and Titus 1: 12. Of course, Barth and Brunner may challenge the infallibility and reliability of such scriptures, but with the same breath they also cannot then rely on the encounter of the Word of God through the Scripture;[465] for even if history of living encounter, and not doctrine, is important, then the case of Melchizedek, Balaam, and Epimenides counts. They were people outside the covenant community.
2. There is no reason why 'regenerated' and 'unregenerate' be distinguished in their epistemic abilities, unless there are definite evidences that the 'regenerate' are really sin-free or immune to all sinful prejudices; in other words, their rational capacities are, presently, really free from the depravity of sin.
3. If a person in a sinful state can encounter God in the Christian proclamation, why can he not be supposed to encounter God in some other tradition, which also may have roots in the communication of God from pre-ecclesiastical times?
4. Christian missionaries have found that the knowledge of God is to found even among the most primitive and unreached people groups of the world. This understanding has really served as a point of contact for evangelization.[466] Barth was wrong as far as missionary anthropology was concerned.
5. There is no way of verifying the epistemic difference between the knowledge of God by dynamic revelation through Scriptures and any other knowledge. Since any confrontation with a knowable object leads to some knowledge of it, there is no way to prove, apart from reference to some dogmatic assumption, that a transformation of heart through faith enables one to know God.

[463] Mueller, *Karl Barth,* p. 92
[464] Genesis 14: 18
[465] The split position of Barth has been noted among critics. Barth, on one hand, insists that the Scriptures are all inspired and, on the other hand, concedes that the writers may be mistaken. Cf. Colin Brown, *Philosophy & the Christian Faith,* p. 257
[466] Cf. Don Richardson, *Eternity in their Hearts*, rev. edn. (California: Regal Books, 1984)

Thus, it may be concluded that the dogmatically colored epistemics of neo-orthodoxy is flawed in its own presumptions. The view that 'Scripture self validates itself' can be proof for the validity of any scriptures of world religions, all of which in some way or the other contradict each other. Finally, the view suffers from verification problems. Any knowledge that anyone is encountered with is understood. And there is no way to determine why the knowledge of God as encountered through the Scriptures is epistemically different from any other knowledge. Thus, the neo-orthodox theory of divine knowledge is not philosophically very plausible. There is, further, an element of arbitrariness in which ultimately what constitutes the Word of God is subjectively decided. In addition, God himself in Christ and not propositions are considered to constitute revelation. In that case, the words of Scriptures can no longer be subjected to exegesis in order to obtain authentic knowledge. The Scriptures are not infallible and contain words of men who recorded their experiences with God. Thus, the encounter of the writers is more important than the words or explanations they give. Thus, empiricality and not rationality reigns high in neo-orthodox theology of revelation. However, experience can never be the foundation of philosophical certainty since it always involves a probability factor. In addition, people all over the world have different kinds of religious experiences. If Barth and Brunner were accepted, there would be no way of saying which of the experiences are genuine encounters and which of them are fake ones if faith is all one has at hand. In such case, then, faith is not rational; it is blind. Therefore, the researcher doesn't find the fideistic approach of neo-orthodoxy as philosophically tenable.

Cognitive Voluntarism

In his paper *Reason and Reliance: Adjusted Prospects for Natural Theology (1990),*[467] James Ross defines 'Cognitive Voluntarism' as the view that 'humans, for the most part, believe not because they are compelled by the evidence, but because they want to (sometimes even being compelled by wants operating as "convictors") because assenting appears to advance their 'apprehended good".' Cognitive voluntarism is seen as our willing reliance upon people, feelings and outcomes, directed to our own fulfillment. According to Ross, it has reemerged as a basis for rational certainty, not only in empirical cognition generally, but in the most important commitments of our lives.

Ross begins by saying that rational certainty about God is more plausible than was believed in the fifties. The fact is that, the notion of what constitutes rational certainty is now better understood. The most important achievement, however, has been the rehabilitation of faith. Faith is seen as willing reliance on others thought better placed to know, as well as willing reliance on the regularities we find in nature and people, to indicate what we should believe. Ross goes on to say that faith is undeniably a source of knowledge.

---

[467] James Ross, "Reason and Reliance: Adjusted Prospects for Natural Theology", June 1990 (http://www.w3.org/TR/REC-html40)

> Faith is undeniably a source of knowledge, often more efficient than finding out for oneself, as the telephone book makes clear. And where faith falls short of knowledge, it often supplies rational certitude, even about the most expensive and conservatively entered human undertakings, especially in engineering (bridge and theater design), naval architecture (hull design), applied science (nuclear power plants), and sometimes even in our formal logical and mathematical disciplines. Faith is a foundation for rational certainty, maybe not a rock-bottom one, but an indispensable one. In fact, trust is the very fabric of social conviction and the golden thread of science.[468]

Thus, according to Ross, rational certainty finds its basis on faith, and faith is indispensable to it. The truth is that rational certainty is more a contextual thing than a universal thing. Thus, what is handed over down to the next generation is voluntarily accepted as truth with rational certainty since voluntary reliance is part of the sociology of knowledge. Everyone has his own system or framework of rational certainty. Here we may pause to consider that Paul on Mars Hill did not quote the Old Testament Messianic prophecies to the Greeks; the Old Testament was a framework of rational certainty chiefly and significantly for the Jews and not for the Greeks. Therefore, one cannot be in the position to judge anyone unless one is able to see from the other's viewpoint. As Ross puts it,

> You cannot get into a position to evaluate until you become an insider. There is no access to the reliability of the "system" from the outside, not any more than there is access to the standpoint of musical, philosophical or aesthetic mastery of judgment, except by discipleship, first.[469]

This is reminiscent of Wittgenstein's language games and forms of life. One cannot be in a position to even understand, far be to judge someone else's position, except by participating in the other's form of life that grants meaning to his position.

In addition to the significance of faith, the cognitive role of feelings to ground rational certainty has also been recognized. Ross says that feelings 'are knowledge-making.' It is the satisfaction and stability of deep feeling that 'hardens belief into rock-bottom commitment.' Feelings play an important role in both faith and reason. Statements like 'I feel I can trust him,' or 'This argument is elegant,' or 'This argument is flimsy,' demonstrate that feelings are not separate from the cognitive process of faith and reason. Thus, rational certainty is not cold. It is charged with feeling and reinforced with faith.

Ross points out that much of the stuff we believe in, and which is crucial to make sense of this world, is convictions beyond all data. For instance, belief in the origins, salvation-history, final judgment, after-life, etc. all go beyond empirical data but are voluntarily believed to make sense of

---

468 *Ibid.*
469 *Ibid.*

the data at hand. In other words, a leap beyond is crucial to make sense of the present ground. Such 'going beyond' provides rationality to life. However, on finding such convictions directly refuted by experience, adherents do replace them with the 'nearest tenable facsimile.' Thus, faith has become crucial to make sense of any knowledge in this world. Further, a sense of the sociology of knowledge as the rationality of relying on those who ought to know has been recognized. For instance, we sit on a train with a feeling of security and satisfaction that we will reach the destination, because we rely on the railways, including the driver as the one who ought to know to drive the engine. This sense of certainty can only be lost by recurrent failure of the railways. Similarly, a worker follows the directions of the engineer, even as a soldier follows the directions of his commander out of reliance in people and the pattern of things.

> "Faith" is no longer the paradigm of "unjustified belief" or "belief that contravenes the evidence", or "belief held against the demands of reason" as Locke and Hume, and even C.J. Ducasse (Nature, Mind and Death. 1948) thought, but rational trust in those who ought to know and, equivocally but relatedly, reliance on the patterns in things. Even non-thinking animals display what Santayana called "animal faith", staking their lives hour by hour until they lose.[470]

Hints of Kierkegaard's 'infinite passion' that seeks satisfaction can also be found in Ross' cognitive voluntarism. We trust because we want something, he says. 'Reliance is, itself, a mode of satisfaction.' As an example, he refers to the hunter who relies on the flight pattern of turkeys because he wants to eat some. Thus, an internal urge, the will, for satisfaction may be considered as the engine of believing.

> Augustine says, "nemo credit nisi volens" ("no one believes unless he wants to"); not that you can believe at will or even disbelieve at will, though the power of the unconscious is awesome at rejection, and impressive at accommodation, regardless of the evidence. Nevertheless, the will is the engine of believing, not the understanding (except in the few cases of the "manifest vision of truth", of compelling obviousness, as Aquinas explained it). And even the compelling obviousness of one's mortal wounds can be willed away, say, as a medic urges one to live, sometimes with success. The rest of the time evidence does not compel belief, the will supplies the commitment.[471]

Regarding the contention that the truth about the existence of God must be demonstrated before being believed in Ross, responds that 'there is nothing knowable by a demonstration that cannot be known with certainty without one, and that includes mathematical and logical theorems.'[472] Demonstrability cannot be considered to be the gateway to knowability. Ross argues that a genuine demonstration will rule out all counterpossibilities. However, such genuine demonstration has

[470] *Ibid.*
[471] *Ibid.*
[472] *Ibid.*

never been and cannot be given; since counterpossibilities from the other side are expected seeing that belief is more a matter of will than of reason. Further, a common ground regarding the validity of some demonstration is not agreed on because of contextual arrangements.

As has been said earlier, it is not simply data at hand but feelings urged by a desire for meaning that play an important role in the forming of convictions. However, feelings cannot be blindly left unrestrained. The refinement of feelings is important for a proper channeling in of knowledge. Practical wisdom, thus, is the ability to live wisely and well, and is the product of good training and example, internalized by one's mimesis (imitation, e.g., of father by son) of refined understanding, feeling and even passion. Ross points out that a life without passion is feeble and furtive. Similarly, philosophy without feeling is philosophy without springs. When it comes to making sense of life, it is not science but practical wisdom that is more appropriate. Thus, one cannot ground his life on dry empirical proofs. According to Ross, feeling creates 'conviction by combining satisfaction (fulfillment in some respect) with reliance (which is itself a kind of satisfaction in dependence, like lovers holding hands) into an outcome that is our conviction.' Reliance on the community that says it has found out the truth (sociology of knowledge) and personal practice, mimesis, or imitation of it that brings satisfaction and rewards lead to convictions.

There are in-built wants that operate as convictors. Convictors convert data into conviction. Thus, according to cognitive voluntarism, people believe not by the force of evidence but by the force of wants that operate as convictors. Ross contends that this approach to knowledge is not something new but was recognized long back. For instance, both 'Augustine and Aquinas (with differences) think our cognitive powers have basic drives (of which the rational appetite, the will, is the chief drive), and thus, have a targeted finality that is no natural end, but rather, life with God.'[473] It may be added that this view is also reflected in William James' concept of 'will to believe.' In his *The Will to Believe and Other Essays*, he wrote:

> …our non-intellectual nature does influence our convictions. There are passional tendencies and volitions which run before and others which come after belief, and it is only the latter that are too late for the fair; and they are not too late when the previous passional work has been already in their own direction.[474]

He also adds that in 'truths dependent on our personal action…faith based on desire is certainly a lawful and possibly an indispensable thing.'[475] However, James qualifies such freedom to believe what one wills with the condition that this freedom 'can only cover living options which the intellect of the individual cannot by itself resolve….'[476] In other words, faith becomes inevitable

---

[473] *Ibid.*
[474] William James, "The Will to Believe," *Philosophy of Religion,* 2nd edn. (ed. John Hick; Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1970), p.219
[475] *Ibid*, p. 228
[476] *Ibid*, p. 230

where intellect cannot go on. So, one is compelled to choose from among the living options available. Since religion is a live hypothesis which may be true it cannot be left ignored. James' view, however, is more pragmatical and similar to Pascal's *Wager*. He says, 'If religion be true and the evidence for it be still insufficient, I do not wish…to forfeit my sole chance in life of getting upon the willing side – the chance depending, of course, on my willingness to run the risk of acting as if my passional need of taking the world religiously might be prophetic and right.'[477] Evidently, the William James' view doesn't sufficiently take into consideration the existential motif of 'infinite passion' and the 'sense of meaningfulness.' However, it is quite close to the main idea of cognitive voluntarism.

According to cognitive voluntarism, then, the rational certainty of faith in God is more a contextual thing. There is an inner urge in man that attempts to find meaning out of all that he knows. Revelation provides the data, usually in the form of traditions passed on by the community, which makes sense of life. Practical wisdom holds on to such beliefs through pragmatic experience that refine the feeling and passion. Feeling combines with reliance to produce conviction. Reliance on verbal testimony is a very important source of knowledge.

> Feeling creates conviction by combining satisfaction (fulfillment in some respect) with reliance (which is itself a kind of satisfaction in dependence, like lovers holding hands) into an outcome that is our conviction. Two kinds of satisfaction suffuse something we assent to. That's how we, those who did not discover anything or even repeat the inquiries, know that there are micro-particles, electrons, molecules, atoms. We rely on the community that says it did find out, and we get satisfaction and rewards by doing so. Thus we are convinced.[478]

Subjectivity of truth, as in Kierkegaard, thus, is paramount. But, in addition is voluntary belief, in the sense that one believes what one wants to believe, or what one is satisfied with. No one stands in a position to evaluate anyone's belief unless he enters the 'form of life', to use Wittgenstein's term, of the other. Reliance and satisfaction, i.e., faith and feeling, thus are crucial to the noetic event. Faith is the foundation of rational certainty, and things are believed in because they make sense of life. Achieving this sense and meaning of life is the goal of practical wisdom, which goes beyond mere science and evidentialism.

Critique of Cognitive Voluntarism

Ross' capture of the spirit of knowledge is excellent. Philosophy without feeling, he says, is philosophy without springs. Surely, 'deep answers the deep'; humans have an inner and infinite urge that can only find satisfaction through faith in an infinite and living God. Therefore, we do go

---

[477] *Ibid*, p. 229

[478] James Ross, "Reason and Reliance: Adjusted Prospects for Natural Theology", June 1990 (http://www.w3.org/TR/REC-html40)

beyond available data to make sense of the available data. The question of origins, meaning, and destiny are unavoidable. Any nearest hint that carries at least some certainty (within the cognitive contextual framework) is immediately converted into a conviction. However, as Ross has pointed out, the danger of falsity can be there. Therefore, he stresses on the refinement of feeling through mimesis, which is observation and practice of those who can be relied on for knowledge of truth. This, obviously, calls for the openness and boldness to change on finding the convictions refuted by experience.

In conclusion, it may be said that Ross' epistemology is very much of subjective experientialism. Though it is true that one's experience can never be refuted by another, it still stands whether someone's experience can comprise reason enough for another to rely on it. According to Ross, the answer is 'yes', if pragmatically satisfaction is visible, and this to the extent that mimesis of it becomes justified. For instance, a son sees his father walking and imitates in order to learn walking; he imitates the experience of his father to become an insider of the experience. Similarly, faith in God as demonstrated in a community life of moral righteousness, devotion, generosity, and other facets of religious life can be experienced through mimesis.

However, what about the possibility of being led into the wrong belief through such imitation? Ross answers that still this does not undermine the value of the social institution as a source of knowledge. Accordingly, a 'social system that hands along truths about food and mixed truths and errors about health and how to live, and superstitions about God and "science", might do perfectly well to hand along an improved product.' In other words, there is no social institution or tradition that can lay claim to perfection in all fields of knowledge. Disagreements among sects over doctrinal points, within the major religions, are ample proof of it. However, some products have only one source and the only way to test the workability of the product is by 'becoming an initiate and making it work.' Thus, one can only experience the power of God's love in Jesus Christ by saying 'yes' to the Gospel of Christ. There is no alternative source to it. Practice and experience itself justifies belief.

Though incapable of providing an absolute and standard test for truth, Ross' cognitive voluntarism does demonstrate the relativity of rational certainty. The star over Bethlehem was proof of Royal birth to the Magi; it might have not been so to many others. The miracles of Jesus were proof of His divine authority to Nicodemus; it might not have been to some others. Proofs and demonstrations are only relatively significant; often, they follow faith. Thus, rational certainty is more a subjective issue. Moreover, Ross' grounding of rational certainty on the will to believe is a significant step. He has also showed that the will to believe is prompted by the inner urge, feeling, and passion for sense and meaning in life. The existential motif, thus, can also be seen in Ross. Thus, cognitive voluntarism attempts to put faith and feeling into their proper place in the noetic event. This, however, is done at the expense of any absolute criteria for truth. The only reference point is the will. Will is prompted by feelings and wants that act as convictors. Thus, truth is more a matter of the subjective will than of objective reality. But, Ross is at least right in saying that in

matters of ultimate value, that is, in convictions that go beyond data to infuse life with meaning, one cannot let go his convictions unless they are directly contradicted by experience *and* replaceable with some other hypotheses that seem to be more reliable. Thus, a Christian cannot throw away his belief in Jesus Christ, since it not only infuses his life with meaning but he also doesn't find it refuted by experience. However, even if it is refuted by experience, he will not cast that belief out unless it is replaceable by some other more reliable belief; he cannot do so because the will to believe urged by the infinite passion within cannot rest calm without finding some source of satisfaction. Thus, faith is rehabilitated in cognitive voluntarism.

Foundationalism

According to Alvin Plantinga, 'foundationalism' is the view that

> some of our beliefs are based upon others. According to the foundationalist a rational noetic structure will *have a foundation* – a set of beliefs not accepted on the basis of others; in a rational noetic structure some beliefs will be basic. Nonbasic beliefs, of course, will be accepted on the basis of other beliefs, which may be accepted as the basis of still other beliefs, and so on until the foundations are reached. In a rational noetic structure, therefore, every nonbasic belief is ultimately accepted on the basis of basic beliefs.[479]

Thus, according to foundationalism, a belief is only rational, if it is either a basic belief or is justified by its relation to a basic belief. The basic beliefs make up the foundation of a particular noetic structure. There are actually two kinds of foundationalism, the narrow one and the broad one. Narrow foundationalism accepts as basic only those beliefs that are evident to the senses, self-evident, or incorrigible.[480] On the other hand, according to the broad foundationalism represented by Alvin Plantinga, there are other kinds of beliefs, including belief in God, which can be properly referred to as basic beliefs. This section will concern itself with this second form of foundationalism as represented by Alvin Plantinga.

Plantinga rejects the evidentialist contention that 'it is wrong always, everywhere, and for anyone to believe anything upon insufficient evidence.'[481] The evidentialist applies this criterion against belief in God and contends that it 'is irrational or unreasonable to accept theistic belief in the absence of sufficient evidence or reasons.'[482] Of course, Plantinga agrees, one does have obligations with respect to one's beliefs: one has intellectual duties. There certainly is such a thing as a general ethic of the intellect. But Plantinga goes on to ask, what that obligation is which a

[479] As cited by Ronald Nash, *Faith and Reason* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1988), pp. 80-81
[480] Ronald Nash, *Faith and Reason*, p. 81
[481] Alvin Plantinga, "Religious Belief Without Evidence", *Introduction to Philosophy* (ed. Louis P. Pojman; Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1991), p. 257
[482] *Ibid*, p. 258

person violates when believing in something without evidence. With regard to theism, suppose that the evidentialist thinks that anyone who believes in God without evidence is violating his all-things-considered intellectual duty. This, Plantinga thinks, is unduly harsh. He asks, 'What about the fourteen-year-old theist brought up to believe in God in a community where everyone believes?'[483] This fourteen-year-old theist doesn't perhaps believe on the basis of evidence but simply believes what he's taught. However, Plantinga asserts that his believing in God is not a violation of an all-things-considered intellectual duty. Further on, the evidentialist's command to either have evidence or don't believe is not binding on everyone. One still possesses the choice of believing what he wants to believe and not submit to the evidentialist's dictum. Plantinga, further, observes that the evidentialist doesn't typically hold that every belief must be met by sufficient evidence; for that would require belief in an infinite number of propositions, obviously a chain of evidences *ad infinitum*: the evidentialist does presuppose that there are certain beliefs that are properly basic and do not need further evidence.[484] Thus, even the evidentialist cannot deny the presupposition of the basicality of some belief.

According to Plantinga, belief in God is also basic. His criterion for basic belief is that 'a belief is properly basic only in certain conditions; these conditions are…the ground of its justification and, by extension, the ground of the belief itself.'[485] For instance, perceptual beliefs ('I see a tree'), memory beliefs ('I had breakfast this morning'), and beliefs ascribing mental states to other persons ('That person is angry') can be properly taken as basic and justified on grounds of experience and other circumstances. However, suppose one knows that his memory is unreliable, then his memory beliefs cannot be justified as basic.

Similarly, belief in God can also be said to be basic and as being justified on certain circumstantial grounds. Among the many other grounds of justification is an inner disposition or tendency to see God's hand in the world about us. Accordingly, 'there is in us a disposition to believe propositions of the sort *this flower was created by God* or *this vast and intricate universe was created by God* when we contemplate the flower or behold the starry heavens or think about the vast reaches of the universe.'[486] There are also many other conditions and circumstances like the sense of God speaking to one while reading the Bible, the feeling of guilt on having sinned, the feeling of being forgiven upon confession, and the sense of gratitude in happy times.

Loosely speaking, then, belief in God is basic; but, strictly speaking it is propositions like 'God is speaking to me', 'God has created all this', 'God disapproves of what I have done', 'God forgives me', and 'God is to be thanked and praised' that are properly basic and not the general proposition 'God exists.'[487] However, the former do entail the latter. But, it may be asked whether, in that case,

---

[483] *Ibid*, p. 261
[484] *Ibid*, p. 262
[485] *Ibid*, p. 264
[486] *Ibid*, p. 264
[487] *Ibid*, p. 265

the belief that the Great Pumpkin returns every Halloween be taken to be basic. Plantinga gives mainly two solutions:

1. The criteria for proper basicality are contextually determined. Accordingly, one's belief in God may be entirely proper and rational and either justified on the basis of other propositions or is basic for him. The disagreement of others on this, however, is irrelevant; for each has his own set of examples to which each must conform. 'The Christian community is responsible to its set of examples',[488] not to those of the atheists.
2. Secondly, for certain people like the Reformed epistemologist, propositions like 'God has implanted in us a natural tendency to see his hand in the world around us' support the basicality of belief in God but not the belief in the Great Pumpkin, one doesn't have a natural tendency to accept beliefs about the Great Pumpkin.[489]

It appears then that relevance counts a lot in the grounding of a belief. What is relevantly basic is reasonable. If a Christian doesn't accept belief in God on the basis of other propositions, then he will conclude that it is basic for him and quite properly so. But that only leads to an experiential subjective approach to knowledge. Thus, contextuality and subjectivity of basicality and justifiability may be said to be important elements of the epistemics of foundationalism. The context of a naturalist justifies the belief that there is no God, while the context of a Christian justifies the belief in God.[490] The basicality of the belief is dependent on the context or conditions of it. Thus, it becomes more proper to investigate the elementary units of beliefs that build the context, say naturalism, than the belief itself. This, however, is straining oneself in excess. Naturalism itself is based on the view that nature, not a transcendent God, is ultimately real. To investigate it is to investigate whether God exists or not. However, that is not similar to asking whether the belief in God is basic or not. Moreover, the reduction of justifiability to subjectivity and contextuality destroys the common ground on which philosophical reflection on the nature of ultimate reality can be possible, the epistemic platform on which philosophers can talk of the metaphysics of divine reality. Therefore, broad foundationalism may be concluded to be philosophically untenable.

Richard Swinburne: *Rational Religious Belief*

Richard Swinburne's book *Faith and Reason (1981)*[491] is an argument for the rationality of religious belief. According to Swinburne, 'a man's belief is a rational belief if he is justified in holding it – for epistemological reasons.'[492] By 'epistemological reasons' he means reasons which concern the likelihood of it being true. In this way, he rules out all other reasons like satisfactory

[488] *Ibid*, p. 267
[489] *Ibid*, p. 267
[490] Ronald Nash, *Faith and Reason*, p. 91
[491] Richard Swinburne, *Faith and Reason* (London: Oxford University Press, 1981)
[492] *Ibid*, p. 45

feelings or pragmatic results like changed moral behavior.

Contrary to the proposition of cognitive voluntarism, Swinburne holds that belief is involuntary. Reiterating Hume's claim of the passivity of belief, he says that a man, in general, cannot choose to believe there and then. 'Believing is something that happens to a man, not something that he does.'[493] He illustrates by saying, 'I believe that today is Monday….I cannot suddenly decide to believe that today is Tuesday….'[494] Consequently, belief is seen as a function of one's basic propositions (and the degree of confidence which one has in them) and one's inductive standards.[495] By 'basic propositions', Swinburne means 'those propositions which seem to a man to be true and which he is inclined to believe, but not solely on the ground that they are made probable by other propositions which he believes….'[496] Propositions like those which report one's perceptions ('I see a clock') or what one perceives ('the clock reads 5.10'), one's memories ('I remember going to London yesterday') or what one remembers ('it rained in London yesterday') are among one's basic propositions. Probable beliefs are beliefs that are made probable by this set of basic propositions.

According to Swinburne, there are five kinds of rationality which beliefs may possess. They are outlined as follows:

i. The Rationality of Internal Coherence. According to Swinburne, a belief is $rational_1$ if it finds itself in coherence with a subject's system of beliefs.[497] Thus, if one's belief is incoherent with one's other beliefs, there has, obviously, been a failure in induction. The belief is $rational_1$ if the response satisfies the believer's own standards.[498] However, this fails to take into account objective validity; therefore, Swinburne moves to the second criterion.

ii. The Rationality of Objective Conformity. Swinburne says that a man's belief is $rational_2$ if it is grounded in those propositions which his present experiences (and memories of his past experiences) in fact justify him in holding or prior propositions which considerations or reason justify him in holding, and is supported by them in virtue of correct inductive standards.[499] For instance, if the sensations which a subject has had justify him only in claiming that he has seen a light, his claim to having seen a UFO is not justified. The belief is $rational_2$ if the response satisfies correct standards.[500] However, the problem of the inadequacy of such standards may be present. Therefore, the third form of rationality is presented.

[493] *Ibid*, p. 25
[494] *Ibid*, p. 25
[495] *Ibid*, p. 25
[496] *Ibid*, p. 20
[497] *Ibid*, p. 45
[498] *Ibid*, p. 49
[499] *Ibid*, p. 46
[500] *Ibid*, p. 49

iii. The Rationality of Subjectively Adequate Investigation. According to Swinburne, a man's belief is $rational_3$ only if his evidence results from past investigation which was in his view adequate, his inductive standards have been subjected to criticism by him and found to be adequate and he has checked, in his view, adequately, that his belief is made probable by his evidence.[501] Thus, $rationality_3$ 'is a matter of the subject's beliefs being backed by investigation which he believed to have been adequate.'[502] However, subjective adequacy may not be real adequacy.

iv. The Rationality of Advanced Subjectively Adequate Investigation. In Swinburne's view then, the third kind of investigation must be properly carried out in order to achieve the fourth kind of rationality. Thus, a 'subject *S* who believes that *p* has a $rational_4$ belief if and only if *S*'s evidence results from past investigation which was by *S*'s own standards adequate, and his inductive standards have been subjected to criticism by *S* which is by *S*'s own standards adequate, and *S* has checked adequately by his own standards that *p* is made probable by his evidence.'[503] Still, it may be seen, that the adequacy standard is only subjective.

v. The Rationality of Objectively Adequate Investigation. According to Swinburne, then, *S*'s belief that *p* is a $rational_5$ belief if and only if *S*'s evidence results from past investigation which was adequate and inductive standards which have been submitted to adequate criticism, and *S* has investigated adequately whether his evidence makes his belief probable.[504] Thus, objective validation is crucial to achieve $rationality_5$ of faith.

Applying the above definitions of rationality to religious beliefs, it can be seen that to many their religious beliefs are $rational_1$ since, to them, these beliefs are coherent with their other beliefs. However, they cannot be $rational_2$ unless they are coherent with beliefs that are objectively justifiable. But since, religious beliefs differ from beliefs about the world, they cannot be judged in the same way as the latter. And so is the need to invoke inductive standards that are commonly shared. The role of past investigation cannot be ignored. A religious belief can only be $rational_3$ if one is sure they are based on an adequate investigation of it in the past. However, such a belief of having carried on the adequate investigation required may be wrong. Perhaps one may have devoted far less time to it than the importance which 'he believed the matter to have warranted by his normal standards of how much time you ought to devote to investigating things.'[505] In that case, the resulting belief would fail to be $rational_4$. Still, in order for the religious belief to be $rational_5$ it must have been investigated according to objectively true standards. But what are these true standards that make a religious belief $rational_5$?

Swinburne sees beliefs as connected to actions. However, a man may fail to act on his beliefs due

[501] *Ibid*, p. 49
[502] *Ibid*, p. 53
[503] *Ibid*, p. 53
[504] *Ibid*, p. 54
[505] *Ibid*, p. 70

to failure in logic; or to say, his inability to logically relate actions to his belief.[506] He may also fail to act on his belief if he lacks other beliefs to support his action. For instance, unless the believer has in addition beliefs about what God wants men to do for him, the mere belief that there is a God dictates nothing in the way of action.[507] Thus, beliefs are important since actions are based on them. Beliefs and actions are logically connected. Therefore, Swinburne argues, that 'as we can only intentionally fulfil our obligations if we know what they are, men have a general duty to acquire true moral beliefs.'[508] Beliefs tell us the means by which ends can be achieved and so it is important that one hold true beliefs.

After establishing the importance of true beliefs, Swinburne asks, 'Which of men's purposes are such that true belief about religious matters will enable them to fulfil them?'[509] One is the general desire of men for long-term well-being and deep well-being, he says. They find that mundane pleasures, though temporarily satisfying, are not permanently and deeply so. And so, when they hear claims of different religions offering ways to a deep well-being which lasts for ever, it becomes worthwhile investigating which, if any, of them is most likely to provide it.[510] Thus, it is very important that one come to some terms regarding religious beliefs.

However, since religious beliefs involve propositions that are not readily obtainable from general experience, Revelation and Creeds become important in one's search of truth. Thus, verbal testimony becomes an important source of religious knowledge. 'We need testimony from someone who has reliable information and can show us his credentials.'[511] However, since in modern days, Swinburne concludes, one has access to more religious creeds than few centuries ago, 'any attempt today to pursue inquiry is far more likely to bear fruit, and so there needs to be more inquiry if a man's beliefs are to be rational$_5$.'[512]

In the *Epilogue* of *Faith and Reason*, Swinburne asserts, in opposition to his earlier statement of belief as involuntary, that faith is voluntary. However, it is so because for the pursuit of a religious way a man needs to seek certain goals with certain weak beliefs, and the choice is his. In this sense, then faith is not the same as passive belief. To Swinburne, religious or metaphysical desires are extension of earthly longings: the natural longing to understand the world extends to the longing to understand the 'nature of reality,' the natural longing for friendship with persons of value extends into the longing for friendship with God.[513] What a man seeks is dependent on the strength of his purposes and his beliefs about how likely it is that pursuit of the way will achieve its purposes.

[506] *Ibid*, p. 27
[507] *Ibid*, p. 28
[508] *Ibid*, p. 75
[509] *Ibid*, p. 77
[510] *Ibid*, p. 77
[511] *Ibid*, p. 194
[512] *Ibid*, p. 197
[513] *Ibid*, p. 198

Weak beliefs get converted into strong ones in course of time as the religious way is followed. When an assumption bears positive results, it turns into a belief. The sort of faith that matters is, Swinburne maintains, a matter of pursuing the goals of religion on certain assumptions believed to be more probable than rival assumptions, and in particular, on the assumption that God will do for one what one wants or needs. That faith, Swinburne says, as trust in God, is voluntary.[514]

To sum it all up, true religious beliefs are important since beliefs and actions are logically connected. Adequate and objective investigation of beliefs is condition for rationality of belief. The standards of induction themselves need to well investigated before adequately investigating the beliefs. The longing for long-term well-being is one reason why religious beliefs regarding God, immortality, and salvation need to be investigated amid the various conflicting claims to truth. The strength of the need determines the intensity and exactness of the search. Since, the challenge of counter-religious claims is great a careful and deep investigation is crucial. Ultimately, a voluntary thrust of faith is necessary in order to choose the way, the following of which in course of time will demonstrate the success or failure of the assumptions.

Critique

It may be asserted here that Swinburne's criterion does not remove the possibility of doubt. Can there be any adequate objective investigation on which faith in God (monistic, polytheistic, pantheistic, or monotheistic) can be based? To a Christian philosopher like Kierkegaard, this is impossible for, he says, 'if I began I would never finish, and would in addition have to live constantly in suspense, lest something so terrible should suddenly happen that my bit of proof would be demolished.'[515] The possibility of falsification is inherent in every empirical, inductive, investigation. Further, since the knowledge of God is not similar to knowledge of the empirical world, one cannot expect certainty of the knowledge of God by recourse to empirical investigation. As far as pragmatic results are concerned, religious traditions all over the world seem to testify that their adherents find peace and satisfaction within them; only prejudice can keep one insisting that they are all liars. Thus, any investigation would at the most only yield a high degree of probability, as Swinburne himself agrees, but never certainty. This, additionally, since our standards of investigation themselves may not be adequate though they appear to be adequate to us and in general.

Rational Fideism: The Subjective-Objective Epistemics of Divine Reality

This section contends that 'rational fideism' or the theory of reason-supported-faith and faith-aided-reason is the best epistemic method to the knowledge of divine reality. This theory attempts

[514] *Ibid*, p. 200
[515] Søren Kierkegaard, "Against Proofs in Religion", *Philosophy of Religion,* 2nd edn. (ed. John Hick; Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1970), p.177

to cover both the subjective and the objective dimensions of any noetic-structure. It attempts to secure the anchor of faith in the rationality of Revelation. Thus, the attempt to establish the right relation between faith and reason is made.

Faith and Reason in Divine Epistemics

It has been indicated earlier that faith and reason cannot be considered to be separate from each other. Faith is the hypostasis of knowability. Unless reason has faith it cannot proceed. Reason believes reason and empirical data in order to come to knowledge. Doubt can only be destructive to epistemics as evident from the epistemic history of Descartes to Hume. The function of experience and testimony is to provide data; the function of reason, to interpret data. Faith provides the intuitive framework within which reason experiences knowledge. In other words, the interpretation of empirical data and the associated faith in the process and outcome thereof constitutes the experience of knowledge. Faith is instinctual and rational. That is to say, instinct patterns and rationality govern the motion of faith. Instinct is the 'innate programming characteristic of a particular animal species that organizes complex patterns of behaviour, enabling members of a species to respond appropriately to a wide range of situations in the natural world.'[516] Thus, the will-to-believe is basically instinctual. Humans believe (thrust faith) in order to survive. But that is not the limit. Man is not just an animal. Even as there are biological instincts, there are also rational instincts. Thus, humans also believe in order to know and experience the truth. 'Seeking faith', consequently is prior to objective cognition. The rationale of faith characterizes the will-to-believe, which is a distinctive of man, not found in animals. It is will only because it involves the rationale of choice. Thus, faith is both instinctual and rational.

Unless there is a 'seeking faith' there cannot be a 'resting faith'. Therefore, divine revelation is useless unless it finds corroboration from the recipient.

> Divine revelation involves two steps: our movement towards God and God's movement towards us….Jesus Christ said, "He who seeks shall find". If this is true – and only willingness to experience, not just to theorize, can tell – then, if we do not seek God, we will not find him.[517]

Thus, even if evidence of supernatural existence abounds, the will-to-doubt can hamper a positive epistemics of divine reality. In other words, one can come face-to-face with God and yet not know Him. The same, however, is also true of any epistemics. The will-to-doubt leads to absolute skepticism and the self-defeating possibility of unbelief. How can one will-to-doubt unless one believes that one's will-to-doubt? Nihilism and despair are bound to ensue, since the rational instinct to know is blocked.

[516] "Instinct", *Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia* (Microsoft Corporation, 2001)
[517] Bruce Wilson, *The Human Journey* (Palm Springs: Ronald N. Haynes Publishers, Inc., 1981), p. 150

The will, however, is also passion. The strength of the will is measured by the energy of passion. Thus, emotions are related to instinct. The 'sense of infinity' is one example of an emotion associated with the rational instinct of curiosity. Emotions like anxiety, dread, guilt, ennui, and anomie may also thus be related to rational instincts. The thwarting of the rational instinct produces negative emotions as the above and the 'release' or contenting of the rational instinct produces positive emotions like peace, confidence, joy, hope, and affection. The instinct-stimulus encounter can be judged by their resultant emotions, whether positive or negative. However, the problem of delusive fulfillment also needs to be tackled. Hence, faith-as-rational must function to check the mere faith-as-instinctual. The blind passions must be governed by the law of reason. This requires the 'balancing' of the negative and positive elements into a 'truthful' system. This is discipline. This is wisdom, temperance, goodness, and justice. Thus, rational fideism aims at the harmonization of the subjective and objective dimensions of the cognitive.

The Role of Doubt

Doubt is the frustration of rationality. It is not the threshold of knowledge. It is the exit-door of knowledge. Doubt precludes knowability by assuming the attitude of will-to-doubt. The will-to-doubt leads in a different direction from that of the will-to-believe. For instance, the problem of pain, of evil and disorder in the universe may be confronted with either a will-to-doubt leading to despair or a will-to-believe leading to hope.[518]

> Hindu devotee: It is difficult to express. The dumb cannot tell the taste of a laddu [sweetmeat]. Religion is my *isht* [my choice]. I believe in faith. A son was born to me, and when he died I did not feel the least sorrow for him. That was due to my faith.[519]

According to James W. Fowler, the opposite of faith is not doubt but nihilism, 'the inability to image any transcendent environment and despair about the possibility of even negative meaning.'[520] But this is a confusion of meanings. Nihilism is the result of perpetual doubting even as optimism is the result of a dogged faith. Thus, doubt *is* the opposite of faith.

However, the will-to-doubt can have a positive result when set in balance with the will-to-believe. In that sense, the exit from one leads to the entrance into another. Thus, the will-to-doubt the supremacy of Inti, the sun-god, and the will-to-believe the traditional God Viracocha, corroborated by reasoning, helped Pachacuti to shift his faith from Inti to Viracocha.[521] Thus, unless there is a balance between the two, extreme results will follow. A will-to-believe not corroborated by a will-to-doubt can lead to fanaticism, fundamentalism, and thus, lead to unchecked fideism. However, when corroborated by a will-to-doubt, it can lead to rational belief. The will-to-believe must not

[518] Ralph Tyler Flewelling, *Christ and the Dramas of Doubt* (New York: Eatons & Mains, 1913), pp. 6-9
[519] E. Stanley Jones, *Christ at the Round Table* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1928), p. 31
[520] James W. Fowler, *Stages of Faith* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1981), p. 31
[521] Don Richardson, *Eternity in their Hearts*, rev. edn. (California: Regal Books, 1984), pp. 37-38

take precedence over the will-to-doubt; likewise, the will-to-doubt must not take precedence over the will-to-believe. It is the role of reason to govern both in balance and harmony.

The Dimensions of Divine Epistemics

Rational fideism understands the epistemics of divine reality to be bi-dimensional: the subjective and the objective. The experience of metaphysical emotions, like the 'sense of infinity' and the '*mysterium tremendum*' comprises the subjective while Revelation as verbal testimony comprises the objective. Following is an analysis of the subjective and objective dimensions of the divine knowledge.

The Subjective Dimension

The reality of the subjective experience of metaphysical sensations cannot be ignored. Metaphysical feelings are characterized by trans-empirical sensations. The sense of spatial infinity, for instance, is metaphysical. Much of philosophizing has originated from it. Similarly, the sense of awe and wonder may also be regarded as metaphysical. This is so because both awe and wonder give rise to metaphysical questions that are either answered in religion or are discussed in philosophy. No marvel then, philosophy is called the art of wondering. The sense of meaninglessness or meaningfulness may also be regarded as metaphysical for they proceed from metaphysical beliefs. Also, the feeling of being free may be considered a metaphysical one. The sense of consciousness itself is quite metaphysical. Thus, metaphysics has a bond with subjective emotions and feelings. Subjective metaphysical sensations play an important role in the stimulation of reason in search of ultimate reality in the same manner that hunger plays an important role in stimulating the organism towards food. The quest is governed by the thrust of faith and the ordering of reason. Thus, the subjective plays an important role in the epistemics of divine reality.

The value of emotions in the epistemic event cannot be ignored. According to Rollo May, emotions and feelings are *intentional,* i.e., they point towards something, some *ought to be.*

> …emotions are not just a push from the rear but a *pointing towards* something, an impetus for forming something, a call to mold the situation. Feelings are not just a chance state of the moment, but a pointing toward the future, a way I *want* something to be….[522]

Similarly, William James saw in the human passional nature an impelling force for the will-to-believe. He says:

> *Our passional nature not only lawfully may, but must, decide an option between*

[522] Rollo May, *Love and Will* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1969), p. 91

> *propositions, whenever it is a genuine option that cannot by its nature be decided on intellectual grounds; for to say, under such circumstance, "Do not decide, but leave the question open," is itself a passional decision, - just like deciding yes or no, - and is attended with the same risk of losing the truth….*[523]

The recent discovery of emotions as one form of intelligence may, therefore, not be very surprising.[524] Metaphysically, emotions may be seen as important clues to the disharmony of the rational-empirical in the existential situation where the existential man reflects on his being as related to Being in general, and tries to make a sense out of it. Thus, emotions become existential when existence becomes a concern for man. In *Religions and the Truth*, Hendrik M. Vroom, points out that fundamental features of humans, which are the fundamental human experiences that correspond to fundamental characteristics of being human play an important role in the religious aspect of one's life. These fundamental features he calls the *existentials* of the human. According to him the chief of such *existentials* are: 'the pursuit of happiness; being vulnerable to the temptation of betraying one's own purpose and duty; yearning for peace, liberty, and justice; the need for providing for oneself; sensitivity to beauty; awe at nature and wonder at the good; the experience of meaning; undergoing suffering; the presence of evil; being dependent on the warmth and assistance of others; seeking insight and orientation in life.'[525] Similarly, existentialists and even post-war psychologists following Victor E. Frankl[526] have shown that the passion for meaningfulness plays an important role in the subjective cognitive life of a human. The role of convictors as inner wants that direct the search for truth has been already noted in James Ross' theory of Cognitive Voluntarism. Thus, the importance of metaphysically oriented existential emotions, drives, and passions can be seen as an important factor in the acquisition of meaningful knowledge. With regard to the concern of this research work, the existential emotions will be related to the metaphysical sensations accompanying the sense of rational-empirical paradoxes.

Metaphysical sensations involve the accompanying sense of the paradoxical, which gives rise to metaphysical emotions. The various paradoxes are the paradoxes between reason and experience, *viz.*, transcendence-immanence, infinity-finitude, immutability-mutation, necessary-contingent, and unity-plurality. The inability of reason and experience to solve the paradoxes generates negative emotions. As has been already seen, neither reason nor experience, which are in reality, by combination, the source of the problem, can bring about a solution. For that would mean in each case to lift oneself by one's own bootstraps. The only solution reason brings in is the rational which nullifies the empirical, ultimately leading to non-dualism. The ultimate that experience can

---

[523] William James, "The Will to Believe", *Philosophy and Contemporary Issues*, 4th edn. (eds. John R. Burr & Milton Goldinger; New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1984), p.144

[524] Daniel Goleman, *Emotional Intelligence* (New York: Bantam Books, 1995), pp. 39-49

[525] Hendrik M. Vroom, *Religions and the Truth* (trans. J.W. Rebel; Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1989), p. 361

[526] Founder of the school of Logotherapy. Cf. Victor E. Frakl, *Man's Search for Meaning* (tr. Ilse Lasch; Mumbai: Better Yourself Books, 1964), pp. 90-115

do is the relativizing of truth to the chagrin of reason. The dissatisfaction of any such solution is bound to generate emotions that are negative; for man is not just conscious but emotionally conscious. The negative emotions that accompany the turbulent condition of Being-as-care's (to borrow Heidegger's notion of the existential human as *Dasein*) failure to harmonize the rational and the empirical, may be identified as *void* or *emptiness, anxiety, boredom, rootlessness, and bewilderment.*

The turbulence can only be visible when the paradox is identified. This can only happen when the one meditates on his own existence. However, religious traditions and data often cover up the sense of the paradox by the offer of answers that 'seemingly' (or 'really'?) remove the paradox. Faith, thus, functions to relieve the existential anguish. It must be asserted, however, that it is the existential anguish, arising from the failure of both reason and experience, that impels the will-to-believe in search for an answer that will bring an harmony into the turbulent condition of the human who cared to reflect on the meaning of his existence. This driving factor is quite closer to Kierkegaard's notions of 'paradoxical passion', 'infinite passion', 'inwardness', 'subjectivity' and James Ross' notion of 'convictors' (in-built wants that prompt faith). Faith, however, seeks reasonability as its ground. But, it has been seen that the rational attributes are empty of positive content in which faith can cast its anchor. For instance, faith has no place in the non-dualistic perspective of reality which is thought to be apprehended not by faith but by mystical intuition. Further, the possibility of faith requires a subject-object distinction so that empirical reality cannot be discarded as illusion. Neither can faith abandon the transcendent rational, for it can't anchor itself in contingent reality. Therefore, faith anticipates the resolving of the paradoxical situation in the following manner; the transcendent as also immanent, the infinite as also related to finite, the immutable as also dynamic, the necessary as also related to the contingent, and the one as also a plurality. This is not at the disposal of the other. The knowledge of ultimate or divine reality thus, as sought by faith is a harmonization of the rational and the empirical.

Following is an analysis of the existential condition that arises from a conflict of the rational and empirical:

i. Void. Void or emptiness or blankness may be considered to be the metaphysical turbulent emotion that arises out of the paradox of the rational sense of transcendence and the empirical sense of immanence. The void is the result of Being-as-care's failure to find meaning within the immanent. Meaning cannot be a given within the world, it must be a given from outside the world. As Wittgenstein pointed it out:

> The sense of the world must lie outside the world. In the world everything is as it is, and everything happens as it does happen: *in* it no value exists – and if it did, it would have no value.
>
> If there is any value that does have value, it must lie outside the whole sphere of what

> happens and is the case. For all that happens and is the case is accidental.
>
> What makes it non-accidental cannot lie *within* the world, since if it did it would itself be accidental.
>
> It must lie outside the world.[527]

Thus, rationally, value can come only from the transcendent. But the nature of the transcendent is such that no matter how near one gets to it, it still remains the transcendent. Empirically, however, nothing can be beyond the world-of-things, all is immanent. Nothing could be beyond the world of space and time. If someone contended that there was something beyond, he would only appear to state the impossible for the beyond of space and time is unconceivable since every conception is conditioned by space and time. In other words, the idea of the transcendent is empirically and conceptually meaningless. Thus, a conflict generates between reason and experience. The *noumena* seems to escape all apprehension as it is endlessly divided against and away from Being's reach. A collision with the unknown[528] and transcendent generates the flabbergasted void. The void is not because of the transcendent nor because of the immanent but because of a lack of harmony between the both. The void is the emotional drainage of life's energy, since it sucks all of existence's possibilities that could fill it with meaning. Therefore, hedonism as immanent-pleasuring only tends towards more voidness.

> And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want.[529]

Such voidness is intolerable, for a meaningless, nihilistic, life is unlivable. Therefore, faith as will-to-believe, impelled by the wantedness of being, seeks to find satiation of the void through a harmony of the transcendent-immanent, not as a fusion of the both as in monism or pantheism, but as a harmonizing relationship between the both, to the effect that immanent human reality finds in the transcendent reality its meaning for living, and not just existing. This struggle and repose in faith is well illustrated in Tolstoy's life.

> I asked, "What is the extra-temporal, extra-causal, extra-spatial meaning of life?" But I gave an answer to the question, "What is the temporal, causal, spatial meaning of my life?" The result was that after a long labour of mind I answered, "None."
>
> The rational knowledge brought me to the recognition that life was meaningless, my life stopped, and I wanted to destroy myself. When I looked around at people, at all

[527] Ludwig Wittgenstein, "On Death and the Mystical", *Philosophy of Religion,* 2nd edn. (ed. John Hick; Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1970), p.333

[528] Søren Kierkegaard, "Against Proofs in Religion", *Philosophy of Religion,* 2nd edn. (ed. John Hick; Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1970), p.175

[529] Luke 15: 14 (KJV)

> humanity, I saw that people lived and asserted that they knew the meaning of life. I looked back at myself: I lived so long as I knew the meaning of life. As to other people, so even to me, did faith give the meaning of life and the possibility of living.[530]

Among mystics, the sense of the transcendent has been recognized by many names, some even attributing to it divinity. It has been referred to as the sense of the 'wholly Other', the '*mysterium tremendum*', and 'the eternal *Thou*'.[531] According to Martin Buber (1878-1965), this sense of *Thou* cannot be satiated till one finds the endless *Thou*, though the *Thou* was present to it from the beginning, thus somewhat stressing the immanenthood of the transcendent at the same time.[532] It is transcendent in the sense that one cannot relate to it as an empirical object of use. Also, the sense of the transcendent needs to be satiated, by the Transcendent, in the same way that thirst needs to be satiated by water; however, the Transcendent is not far away but 'present to it from the beginning.' God is also 'the mystery of the self-evident, nearer to me than my *I*.'[533] 'For in him we live, and move, and have our being.'[534] This sense of *Thou*, to Buber, no matter the name, is the experience of God. Thus, even if someone who believes himself to be godless, 'gives his whole being to addressing the *Thou* of his life, as a *Thou* that cannot be limited by another, he addresses God'.[535] For Buber, however, God is not an object to be searched for in isolation, He can be encountered in any relational event. Thus, any *I-Thou* relationship in the world can be a doorway to the consummating event of addressing God and not just talking about Him. In the *I-Thou* relationship does one find an answer to the problem of distanthood encountered in the *I-It* relationships. It is in the *I-Thou* relationship that one encounters the transcendent within the immanent in an authentic personal and dialogical relationship.

However, does an *I-Thou* relationship of Buber mean anything unless it is personal and mutual, and not just uni-directional? Isn't such a relationship almost nothing more than the *I-It* relationship? Therefore, an *I-Thou* relationship with God can only be possible if it is personal, mutual, and reciprocal. In other words, unless God Himself is concerned with human reality and expresses this concern visibly, any *I-Thou* relationship with God will be of no value. One cannot relate to an impersonal transcendental. One can only relate where the relationship itself is personal, mutual, and meaningful. Therefore, the personality and concernedness of God must be stressed before there is any personal and meaningful relationship with Him.

To Rudolf Otto, it is the '*mysterium tremendum*' that is the deepest and the most fundamental

---

[530] Leo Tolstoy, "Faith Provides Life's Meaning", *Classic Philosophical Questions*, 7th edn. (ed. James A. Gould; New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1992), pp. 596, 597
[531] Martin Buber, *I and Thou* (tr. Ronald Gregor Smith; New York: Collier Books, 1986), pp. 75, 78-79
[532] *Ibid*, p. 80
[533] *Ibid*, p. 79
[534] Acts 17: 28
[535] Martin Buber, *I and Thou*, p. 76

element in all strong and sincerely felt religious emotion.[536] The *mysterium tremendum* in Otto's view often invades the human soul in different ways.

> The feeling of it may at times come sweeping like a gentle tide, pervading the mind with a tranquil mood of deepest worship. It may pass over into a more set and lasting attitude of the soul, as it were, thrillingly vibrant and resonant, until at last it dies away and the soul resumes its 'profane', non-religious mood of everyday experience. It may burst in sudden eruption up from the depths of the soul with spasms and convulsions, or lead to the strangest excitements, to intoxicated frenzy, to transport, and to ecstasy…. It may become the hushed, trembling, and speechless humility of the creature in the presence of – whom or what? In the presence of that which is a *mystery* inexpressible and above all creatures.[537]

To Otto, this sense called *mysterium tremendum* is characterized by three elements, *viz.*, the element of awefulness, the element of 'overpoweringness' *('majestas'),* and the element of 'energy' or urgency. Otto considers the element of awefulness beginning as the feeling of 'something uncanny', 'eerie', or 'weird' to be the basic factor and the basic impulse underlying the entire process of religious evolution.[538] As religion progresses, according to Otto, the 'shudder' becomes a mystical awe. The element of 'overpoweringness' is the recognition of the infinite chasm between the transcendent and the self; the self is 'overpowered' by the *majestas.* It seems as nothing, as dust and ashes as against 'majesty'.[539] The element of 'energy' or urgency of the mystical object is symbolically represented as its vitality, passion, will, activity etc.

Otto calls this 'mysterious', mystical, or numinous object as the 'wholly other', as being beyond our apprehension and comprehension, 'whose kind and character are incommensurable with our own, and before which we therefore recoil in a wonder that strikes us chill and numb.'[540] Thus, terms such as 'supernatural' and 'transcendent' as applied to the nouminous or the mystical object are negative attributions that exclude the numinous from nature and the world or cosmos respectively.[541] Thus, for Otto, the sense of *mysterium tremendum* is the basis for the development of religion.

Consequently, 'wonder', 'awe', 'creaturehood', and 'overpoweringness' may be considered to be the emotions associated with an encounter with the transcendent, according to Otto. The mystical encounters, though short-lived, have an immense effect on the life of the mystic. However, as stated earlier and as William James had argued, the mystic's experience cannot serve as conclusive

[536] Rudolf Otto, *The Idea of the Holy* (tr. John W. Harvey; New York: Galaxy Book, 1958), p. 12
[537] *Ibid*, pp. 12-13
[538] *Ibid*, pp. 14-15
[539] *Ibid*, p. 21
[540] *Ibid*, p. 28
[541] *Ibid*, p. 30

argument for anyone; they are true only for the mystic[542] and mystics differ greatly according to their ideological background. Therefore, the mystical experience cannot provide a positive solution to the problem of the transcendent-immanent. Thus, the paradox of transcendent-immanent may be regarded as the event that generates the metaphysical sense of void which is the motivation of the will-to-believe towards a rational and existential understanding of ultimate reality.

The problem of the transcendent-immanent is a considerable issue in the Bible. For Job, for instance, the transcendence and immanence as epitomized in God is frustrating enough. The failure to see, to hear, to debate with Him (His transcendence) and the reality that He surrounds, is concerned with, and punishes humans is strenuously frustrating to Job.

> Wherefore hidest thou thy face, and holdest me for thine enemy?[543]

> Oh that I knew where I might find him! *that* I might come *even* to his seat! I would order *my* cause before him, and fill my mouth with arguments….Behold, I go forward, but he *is* not *there;* and backward, but I cannot perceive him: on the left hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold *him:* he hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see *him:* but he knoweth the way that I take….[544]

To Paul, on the other hand, the concept of transcendence-immanence as epitomized in God is not frustrating but meaningful. God, though transcending the limitations of space ('dwelleth not in temples') is not 'far from every one of us'; in fact, 'in him we live, and move, and have our being.'[545] However, for Paul, the dilemma of the transcendent-immanent is resolved in a faith in Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ brings meaning to immanent existence from a transcendent reality of righteousness, holiness, truth, and justice. The permanency of the Incarnation demonstrates the vitality of the transcendental immanence; the concern of transcendent to the immanent.[546] The atoning death of Jesus Christ is the climax of the transcendent concern with immanent reality. It gives existential meaning to life and provides a basis for faith to apply that transcendent-immanent harmony of the Cross to one's own existence. Through faith in the crucified Son of God, thus, does one find a harmony of the transcendent-immanent within one's own life.

> I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.[547]

---

542 William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, p. 334
543 Job 13: 24 (KJV)
544 Job 23: 3-4,8-10
545 Romans 17: 24, 27, 28
546 The Incarnation is not similar to *avatara*, in which the deity assumes form only till the accomplishment of mission. The Incarnation of Christ is permanent. He is human forever.
547 Galatians 2: 20 (KJV)

Thus, faith in the crucified Son of God brings harmony to the dilemma of the transcendent-immanent, according to Paul.

ii. Anxiety. Anxiety or angst may be considered to be the metaphysical turbulent emotion that arises out of the paradox of the rational sense of infinity and the empirical sense of finitude. The problem of infinity includes the problem of spatio-temporality. The paradox is that while one does find oneself in a relatively finite space and time, one cannot rationally conceive the edge of space and time. Any serious reflection on the world brings this problem to core. Anxiety is not over infinity or over finity but over the failure of harmony between the both. A failure to harmonize this problem of the finite-infinite gives rise to anxiety, as can be seen in the testimony of Martin Buber given below.

> **…** what stirs and terrifies **...** [man] **...** is not the **...** infinity of space **...** It is the fact that, by the impression of infinity, any concept of space, a finite no less than an infinite, becomes uncanny to him, for really to try and imagine finite space is just as hazardous a venture as really to try and imagine infinite space, and makes man just as emphatically conscious that he is not a match for the world. When I was about fourteen years of age I myself experienced this in a way which has deeply influenced my whole life. A necessity I could not understand swept over me: I had to try again and again to imagine the edge of space, or its edgelessness, time with a beginning and an end or a time without beginning or end, and both were equally impossible, equally hopeless – yet there seemed to be only the choice between the one or the other absurdity. Under an irresistible compulsion I reeled from one to the other, at times so closely threatened with the danger of madness that I seriously thought of avoiding it by suicide.[548]

A sense of the finitude of being and infinity of time has been regarded as one cause of anxiety. For instance, in Heidegger, the nothingness of death arouses anxiety, which a man tries to evade by becoming preoccupied with everyday life and thus forget death.[549] Death, as the finality of finitude, is shocking news, existentially speaking. It shocks, it flusters, it upsets, it agitates, it strikes one with panic. Distinct to fear, which is always of some specific thing, according to Heidegger, anxiety is existentially characterized.[550] The possibility or impossibility of life beyond death, therefore, becomes a significant inquiry. Obviously, religion offers answers for this problem, though its association of themes like judgment, heaven, and hell doesn't remove away the consternation. In that case, the anxiety of death is complicated by the fear of hell.[551] In death, thus, one finds a rending of the finite from the infinite. It is the ripping apart of

---

[548] Martin Buber, *Between Man and Man* (1947), as cited by Norman Swartz, *Beyond Experience: Metaphysical Theories and Philosophical Constraints*, 2nd edn. (www.sfu.ca/philosophy/beyond_experience/index.htm, 2001, 2nd edn..)

[549] Fred Berthold, Jr., *The Fear of God* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1959), p. 70

[550] Anthony C. Thiselton, *The Two Horizons* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eermans, 1980), p. 171

[551] Fred Berthold, Jr., *The Fear of God*, p. 45

temporality from the framework of infinity. To the agnostic, death is a premonition of uncertainty. Such death assuredly arouses anxiety.

> Ay, but to die, and go we know not where;
> To lie in cold obstruction and to rot;[552]

Thus, the sense of temporality in face of infinity arouses anxiety.

But anxiety may not be fruitless. For instance, for Kierkegaard, anxiety is the precursor to freedom; for 'this dread is by the aid of faith absolutely educative, laying bare as it does all finite aims and discovering all their deceptions.'[553] In other words, anxiety aided by faith is the doorway to freedom from all deceptions. The anxiety of Naciketa, in the Katha Upanisad, is sought to be removed through the enlightening teaching, of Yama the King of death, about the birthlessness and deathlessness of Self, the cyclically infinite nature of time, and emancipation through realization. However, since many such answers to this problem of the infinite-finite exists in religion, reason must govern the impulses of will-to-believe and will-to-doubt in balance.

According to the Bible, the problem of anxiety can only be resolved through an anchoring of hope in the eternal. Existentially speaking, this anchoring is obtained in the eternal character of God. Soteriologically speaking, to the writer of the Hebrews this anchoring is obtained in the ascension and priestly service of Jesus Christ. The message of such salvation is vindicated by signs, wonders, and miracles (2: 3-4). Jesus Christ is seen as the vanquisher of death and the deliverer of mankind (2: 10-18). The priesthood of Christ is eternal in the heavens (7: 16, 24; 9: 11-14). In Christ one's hope is anchored as sure and steadfast, in the Holiest Place of eternity (6: 19). To the writer of Hebrews then, faith, confidence, and patience serve as antidote to anxiety (11: 35-39).

iii. Boredom. Boredom or ennui may be considered to be the metaphysical turbulent emotion that arises out of the paradox of the rational sense of immutability and the empirical sense of mutation. Reason anticipates permanence, changelessness, and immutability as the quality of ultimate reality; however, for experience immutability is an impossibility. Nothing immutable is empirically conceivable; for if something doesn't move in space, it at least moves in time. The tension between the immutable and the mutable produces the emotion of ennui, the sense of tediousness and vexation associated with the absence of immutable or lasting purpose in the cosmic phenomena of change. Boredom is not due to immutability or mutability but due to the failure of harmony between the both. Thus, one is not bored with the same self, that experiences change. No one

---

[552] William Shakespeare, *Measure for Measure,* III. i., *Fifteen Poets* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1965), p. 82

[553] Søren Kierkegaard, *The Concept of Dread* (1944), as cited by Fred Berthold, Jr., *The Fear of God*, pp. 63-64

expects the consciousness of self to be filled with multiple memory-erasures of itself…. Obviously, the framework of immutability ('self' or 'itself') is impossible to dispense with, since it is provided by reason. Similarly, mutability is anticipated by experience without which no experience would be possible; all would be a monotony. Boredom, however, results when mutation fails to relate and harmonize with the immutable. Thus, the Preacher says,

> Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all *is* vanity. What profit hath a man of all his labour which he taketh under the sun?... All things *are* full of labour; man cannot utter *it*: the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing….I have seen all the works that are done under the sun; and, behold, all *is* vanity and vexation of spirit.[554]

Thus, in the Preacher's eyes, work and labour is a burdensome drag and vexation since, first of all, it seems to possess no meaning; but, secondly, it is incessantly unsatiable. Thus, the incessant labour for novelty, creativity, and change in order to find a final immutable satisfaction itself becomes tedious since no immutable satisfaction seems to come out of all labour.

> I sought in mine heart to give myself unto wine….I made me great works….I made me gardens and orchards….I made me pools of water….I got *me* servants and maidens….I gathered me also silver and gold….So I was great, and increased more than all….And whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not from them….Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labour that I had laboured to do: and, behold, all *was* vanity and vexation of spirit, and *there was* no profit under the sun.[555]

Obviously, neither reason, for whom, as has been seen, immutability comes at the expense of mutability, nor experience, for whom mutability precludes immutability, is able to solve the paradox. The problem is rather existential and can only be resolved in an existentially fulfilling situation.

According to the Bible, this condition of contentment cannot be given by the world of experience; for the world itself is a turbulent changing one, pointing out the fact that as a whole the universe itself has not reached the point of contentment. 'For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.'[556] Accordingly, Jesus says to His disciples: 'Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you.'[557] To the Samaritan woman at the well, He says: 'Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the

---

[554] Ecclesiastes 1: 2, 3, 8, 14 (KJV)
[555] Ecclesiastes 2: 3-11
[556] Romans 8: 22
[557] John 14: 27 (KJV)

water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.'[558]

Thus, some kind of an immutable condition ('never thirst again') of incessant fulfillment ('well…springing up', indicating motion) is the solution for the problem of boredom that arises from the immutable-mutable paradoxical sensation.

iv. Rootlessness. The sense of existential rootlessness may be considered to be the metaphysical turbulent emotion that arises out of the paradox of the rational sense of necessity and the empirical sense of contingency. The sense of rootlessness is the result of the failure to root the contingent in the necessary. It is not a sense against the notion of necessity nor a sense against the notion of contingency, but a sense of disharmony between the necessary and the contingent. It arises out of the realization of the self as contingent upon several other contingents that are contingent upon even more other contingents and so on *ad infinitum*. Contingency, however, is integral to experience. Every empirical object is dispensable and so not necessary, i.e., contingent. For Kant, however, as been seen though every empirical object is contingent, space and time are not contingent. They are not dependent on anything, but the existence of everything else can only be in relation to, in that sense conditioned by, space and time which to him are the *a priori* given forms of intuition. However, the introduction of such a notion only complicates the problem. For one cannot be rooted in space and time. One only finds oneself in space and time but cannot derive the sense of rootedness from the emptiness thereof. For even as space without objects-as-extensions is 'empty'; likewise, time without objects-as-events is 'empty', and emptiness begets nothing but emptiness. Thus, the failure to root the contingent in a necessary generates the sense of rootlessness.

The emotion of rootlessness is both temporal and trans-temporal. It is rootlessness in relation to the past, the present, and the future. It transcends the barriers between each and is related with the whole by being detached from time's conditioning nature. Thus, the sense of rootlessness is metaphysical. There have been recent attempts to root existence in some sub-atomic, quantum world of physics.[559] However, there is no way to even prove whether the laws of quantum theory themselves are necessary. Obviously, they cannot be considered to be indispensable. The laws themselves are rootless. The monist rationalist attempt to do away with the contingent is unacceptable for it also does away with the sense of reality. Similarly, the empirical attempt to do away with the notion of necessity cannot solve the existential problem of the necessary-contingent. Thus, rootlessness is a serious problem arising out of the paradox of the necessary-contingent.

The Bible offers the solution in the revelation that the essence of man is rooted in the *image of God,* and his existence, in the eternal plan and purpose of God. Rootlessness is the problem of human alienation from the will (plan and purpose) of God through the corruption of willful sin and

---

[558] John 4: 13, 14 (KJV)
[559] Cf. Gary Zukav, *The Dancing Wu Li Masters* (New York: Bantam Books, 1980)

the fading away of the *image.* Salvation is the rooting of self in God. By giving oneself in faith to God, one passess from rootlessness to rootedness and is grafted into the Vine called Christ. This and such answers need to be considered by faith as data for inquiry in order that one achieves the sense of rootedness.

v. Bewilderment. Bewilderment may be considered to be the metaphysical turbulent emotion that arises out of the paradox of the rational sense of unity and the empirical sense of plurality. Bewilderment is confoundedness. Reason is unified, experience is plurified. Therefore, rational epistemics leads to non-dualism and empirical epistemics leads to pluralism. However, each does so at the expense of the other which is against the harmony-seeking nature of Being. However, the paradox can neither be harmonized by reason nor by experience. The existent state of turbulence related to the unity-plurality paradoxical noesis engenders the emotion of bewilderment. One is neither bewildered by the rationality of unity nor by the empiricality of plurality but by the disharmony between them. One is baffled by the possibility of the contradictory juxtaposition of the both.

The problem of unity-plurality has been dealt with in the chapter on rational epistemics. Zeno's paradoxes and Gaudapada's arguments tried to prove that reality is not plural but non-dual. This, it has been seen, is the logical ultimate of rational epistemics. On the other hand, the pluralism of animism and polytheism have also been seen. Plurality is the uncogitated result of empirical epistemics. One has to assume the plural in any experience. Consciousness can only be consciousness of something other than the subject of consciousness. Therefore, the non-dualist conclusion must be at the expense of empirical consciousness.

> As a lump of salt dropped into water dissolves with (its component) water, and no one is able to pick it up, but from wheresoever one takes it, it tastes salt, even so, my dear, this great, endless, infinite Reality is but Pure Intelligence. (The self) comes out (as a separate entity) from these elements, and (this separateness) is destroyed with them. After attaining (this oneness) it has no more consciousness.[560]

However, can consciousness be anything apart from the empirical? Is there a rational consciousness? Isn't consciousness an experience, i.e., empirical? Thus, 'no more consciousness' as the absence of empirical consciousness and the 'Pure Intelligence' as nothing but 'pure reason' is empirically nonsensible, unconceivable, and empty of meaning. The concept of it, eventually, is a dismissal of all experience which is 'strange' to Being. On the other hand, the lack of a ground of being in the plurality of things-in-the-world is also a concern. Therefore, Being-as-care seeks a point of harmony between the both. The frustration over the inability to reconcile them leads to bewilderment. Obviously, since the problem is an existential one than a rational or empirical one, it must be existentially resolved.

[560] Brhadaranyaka Upanisad II. Iv.12, (tr. Swami Madhavananda; Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1997), p. 255

The Trinitarian perspective of the Divine as Triune (Unity in Trinity) and the *image of God* in man as a social unity of plurality ('male and female…multiply…have dominion') has been seen as one way of resolving this existential dilemma of unity-plurality. The Divine Community created the human community in its own image of unity in plurality, a concept that cannot be explained fully in either rational or empirical terms. The existential element that harmonizes the paradoxical senses is the divinely rooted gift of Love. Love is neither rational nor irrational, it is trans-rational, it is spiritual ('the fruit of the Spirit'). It flows from Divine Nature, the Trinity, and resolves the confoundedness of sin-stricken humanity.

Sin brings confusion,[561] according to the Bible, because of its revolt against relationships for the sake of the ego, that wants to be autonomous. It begins with a revolt against the Divine Community, which also means a revolt against community. As a result the unity-plurality lose existential harmony. Confusion is related to the experience of shame. Shame is the sense of disharmony between self and community. Shame is the result of spiritual lovelessness, of the hesitancy of transparency, the emotional awkwardness of unrelatedness. According to the Bible, the permanency of inner disharmony owing to the presence of sin and the factuality of total depravity rationalizes shamehood. Shamehood can only be dispelled by the experience of infinite death. Dignity can only arise in the New Creation. Thus, shame is not sinful, since it is the existential emotion arising out of the in-built failure to harmonize the dilemma of the sense of unity and plurality within the community through spiritual love. Shamelessness is sinful, since it is the suppression of a justified metaphysical sense in revolt to the harmonizing gift of Love. Shamelessness is Love crucified. Romans 1: 18-32 tells that shamelessness is characterized by the sacrifice of the metaphysical for the physical, by the obfuscation of the plural with the real. It can also be the obfuscation of the non-plural with the real. Biblically, however, the real is a harmony of both the plural and non-plural, of the unity-plurality. Thus, the Bible, in essence, attempts to resolve the problem of unity-plurality through Love.

The Objective Dimension: Revelation

Having seen the impossibility of either reason or experience to go beyond themselves in the quest for divine reality, and having demonstrated the necessity of Revelation or *Sabdic Pramana* as the only possible source of knowledge about God on which divine epistemics becomes possible, it is now contended that Revelation constitutes the objective dimension of the epistemics of divine reality. Revelation is the communication of 'truths' beyond the discovery of either reason of experience. Revelation must necessarily be verbal in order to certify authenticity of communication. Therefore, rational fideism doesn't regard supernatural phenomena such as miracles and visions as objective dimension of the epistemics of divine reality. Such phenomena, of themselves and by themselves, communicate nothing in certainty. The star that the Magi saw would have meant nothing unless backed by some verbal revelatory content already in

[561] Cf. Daniel 5: 8: 'O Lord, to us *belongeth* confusion of face…because we have sinned against thee.' (KJV)

circulation. However, the vagueness of the revelatory message from the Diaspora only served to lead the Magi to the wrong place, Herod's palace. The crucifixion of Jesus was only a phenomena and would have meant nothing without the meaning-infusing-conditional of His words. Supernatural phenomena derive their meaning from the revelatory context in which one finds oneself. Thus, where reason as *a posteriori* and *a priori* fails to reach further, Revelation as verbal testimony *(Sabda)* comes to aid. Therefore, Revelation is the objective dimension of the epistemics of divine reality.

However, the revelatory content as verbally communicated (in written or oral form), involves the use of inference or reason as the hermeneutics of apprehension. The verbal can only be understood rationally. The verbal includes both the poetic and the prose. Each linguistic genre has its own logicality. The law of non-contradiction applies in any context where meaning is not arbitrary but absolute. Though the hermeneutical problem of horizons exists, especially where Revelation comes in writing, this doesn't rule out the logicality of the verbal. Words cannot be viewed to serve as blank symbols serving as launchpads to trans-rational enlightenment, as in Zen. Words that mean nothing also reveal nothing. Therefore, the revelatory content must be rationally cognized. Further, in addition to revelation as not contradicting rationality, revelation also must be anticipated by reason. As has been demonstrated in the rational epistemics of divine reality, reason severed from all knowledge cannot arrive at any knowledge. However, reason provided with just empirical data and forced to analyze such data by its own principles, finds this data to be existentially non-rational, and therefore, as in monism and non-dualism, phenomenal reality is rejected. However, such rejection of phenomenal reality is in clash with the empirical epistemics of reality, which in turn rejects all such metaphysical (rational) speculations as nonsensical. Obviously, such polarizations are strange to the existential experience that seeks meaning and sense out of experience. Therefore, a harmony between reason and experience is expected. In this sense, it may be said that reason anticipates that the revelatory content will provide a better hypothesis of faith proceeding from which some understanding of divine reality can be obtained. Such enterprise then constitutes the rationality of faith.

Also, the view that Revelation is irrational or absurd and therefore an object of faith, cannot be understood to mean that faith naturally tends towards the irrational. As Swinburne argues about Tertullian's claim that 'the Son of God died' was 'worthy of belief, because it [was] absurd':

> …if Tertullian is saying that the fact that some proposition really is 'absurd' or 'impossible' is grounds for believing it to be true, then we must respond that not merely are these not good grounds for believing a proposition, but that no one *can* believe any proposition on the ground that it is absurd or impossible. For to claim the latter involves claiming that all the evidence counts against the proposition. And if Tertullian believes that all the evidence is against a proposition, he must believe that that proposition is improbable, and in that case he cannot believe that it is true. He may die rather than deny the proposition in public; he may in some sense plan his life on

> the assumption that the proposition is true, but he does not *believe* it. There are logical limits to the possibilities for human irrationality, and even Tertullian cannot step outside them.[562]

Rationality of Revelation implies the consistency, unambiguity, and understandability of Revelation. Thus, any revelatory content that is inconsistent with itself, involves ambiguity, and assumes absolute mystery cannot be rationally regarded as revelation at all. And so, rationality of Revelation is part of the objective dimension of the epistemics of divine reality, according to rational fideism.

While the rational determines the objective meaningfulness of Revelation, the fideistic determines the subjective meaningfulness of it. The thrust of faith, prompted by the existentials of the paradoxical conditionalities (introduced by reason and experience) can only find in the rationality of Revelation a secure basis. Faith cannot anchor on ambiguity, inconsistency, flux, and uncertainty. Therefore, unless Revelation is rational and singular communicative (communicating a single meaning) it only serves to increase the anguish of faith. Thus, according to rational fideism, genuine epistemics of divine reality includes the fideistic that seeks to be rational. Therefore, rational fideism as the epistemics of both the subjective and objective dimensions of human existential and metaphysical cognition is the best argued epistemics of divine reality, according to the researcher.

The Indian Criterion for Sabda Pramana

Earlier, in the first chapter, the three-fold criterion of Indian philosophy to evaluate any claim to Revelation, as specified by Hiriyanna, were pointed out. An understanding of the three-fold criterion with reference to rational fideism may also prove helpful in the epistemics of divine reality. The three-fold criterion is the condition of extra-empiricality (alaukika), the condition of non-conflict (abadhita), and the condition of antecedent probability (sambhava).[563]

The Condition of Extra-Empiricality (Alaukika). According to this condition, the revealed truth should be such that it is unattained or unattainable from experience. In other words, the knowledge gained, thereby, is not purely empirical. This doesn't mean that such knowledge has nothing to do with experience; for in that case revelation having no relation with the human experience would fail to communicate in understandable terms. Rather by the condition of extra-empiricality is meant that the revelatory content must be transcendental or esoteric, something which is beyond the reach of human experience. Similarly, in rational fideism it is contended that experience cannot serve as data for the epistemics of divine reality. All experience contains a considerable degree of probability, especially in relation to the quest for divine reality. In

[562] Richard Swinburne, *Faith and Reason*, pp. 24-25
[563] M. Hiriyanna, *Indian Philosophy*, pp. 180-181

addition, it has already been proved that empirical epistemics is immanent and opposed to all metaphysical enquiries. Empirically speaking, then the metaphysical quest for knowledge of ultimate reality has no meaning. But this is contrary to the passion of reason. Therefore, it may be concluded with the Indian logicians that experience cannot serve as data for divine epistemics; consequently, the revelatory content must come from beyond experience.

The Condition of Non-Conflict (Abadhita). According to this criterion, the revelatory content must not be contradicted by any of the other pramanas. Neither should it be inconsistent with itself. Thus, the revelatory content must not be opposed to either reason or experience. Rational fideism contends that the revelatory content must not contradict either reason or experience or even nullify either of them but must be such that a harmony between reason and experience is achieved. Thus, the monistic rejection of phenomenal experience and the pluralistic rejection of absolute rational reality is to rational fideism a contradiction of the pramanas. Consequently, neither of them stand up to the criterion of non-conflict.

Secondly, the revelatory content must not be inconsistent. This is necessitated for any possibility of understanding. Inconsistencies only tend towards confusion of meanings. In order for the revelatory content to be consistent, its contents should not be in conflict with each other. This means that the revelatory content should be conducive to the formation of a system which can be proven to be totally conformable to the revelatory content. Though human frailty may be cited as inadequate before the revelatory content to build such a system, yet its theoretical possibility cannot be ignored. In Christian theology, this conditionality of Revelation is reflected in the doctrines of infallibility and inerrancy. According to the doctrine of infallibility, the revelatory content is infallible as to its communication of the message of Revelation. According to the doctrine of inerrancy, the words themselves that form the content of Revelation, are free from errors in the sense that they are *the* right words that rightly communicate the revelatory message. Thus, internal consistency is recognized as important for the revelatory content to be true.[564]

The Condition of Antecedent Probability (Sambhava). The third condition is that reason should foreshadow what revelation teaches. This means that the truths of revelation are not such that conflict with the anticipation of reason. Accordingly, rational fideism contends that the objectivity of revelation must find an associate in the subjective dimension of human rational-empirical or metaphysical experience. The existential dimension of the human (for whom existence is a concern) anticipates revelation. In this sense, then, reason foreshadows what revelation teaches. Consequently, the content of revelation may not be said to be completely new, though it is essentially novel as being ‘extra-empirical’.

---

[564] It is a debate whether the whole of the Bible should be regarded as *the* revelatory content or that *the* revelatory content is not limited to or extensive with all the words of the Bible. Differences of opinions lead to differences regarding the infallibility or inerrancy of Scripture. However, it is rationally obvious, that infallibility and inerrancy must be integral to the *revelatory content* in order that it possess internal consistency; for revelation cannot contradict revelation unless it is false, and in that case unreliable.

For instance, rational fideism contends that, on the basis of non-conflict of the pramanas, reason foreshadows ultimate reality to be both a unity and plurality; however, reason itself is not able to find out how such a unity and plurality can be a possibility. The Christian Revelation of God as Tri-unity, tells that God is, in essence a unity and, in relation a tri-personality. Thus, the Christian Revelation finds an element of antecedent probability in reason.

Consequently, it may be argued that rationality (consistency), empiricality (non-conflict), and existentiality (as rational anticipation) must form the cognitive framework of an understanding of divine reality.

Principles of Rational Fideism

Four principles of rational fideism will be discussed here. The principles follow from the subjective-objective hypothesis of rational fideism and the discussion of the Indian criterion. The principles are as follows:

Consistency is not the same as conceivability. The rationality of Revelation requires the consistency of its content. However, the inability to conceptualize the Divine as reported by Revelation cannot be qualification for its rejection as being inconsistent. Conceptions are basically empirical. Therefore, an attempt to conceptualize the Divine is tantamount to doing empirical epistemics and not rational fideistic epistemics. To cite as an example, the researcher believes that the doctrine of Trinity must not be approached empirically. For that will only lead to frustration. Consistency is not the same as correspondence; for in that case, the positivist law of verification would determine theological justifiability. But this law has already been shown to be inapplicable to theological epistemics owing to its failure to be applicable to itself in the first instance. The law transcends itself and proves the non-empiricality of itself thus violating its own proposition. Experience doesn't provide a sure basis for divine knowledge and possess a high degree of ambiguity and probability. In addition, truths that transcend the limits of 'present' experience cannot be sourced from experience. For instance, one can know nothing about the truth of the origin of the universe, if Revelation reveals of it, since no one has witnessed any origin of the universe in order to know what it is like with which the revelatory content must be in correspondence. Consistency, however, means that the revelatory content must not conflict with itself on any given point. However, this doesn't mean that divine reality can't find any conceptual analogy (though misty) in experience.

Faith must anchor in the ultimate. Existential fulfillment must be anchored in the knowledge of divine reality. However, divine reality cannot attract faith unless it manifests itself as concerned with human reality. Unless God is concerned with humans, all human striving is pointless. Further, unless God reveals Himself to man, faith as nothing substantial to base itself on. Rational faith cannot build castles in the air. It needs a solid ground on which it can stand. Therefore, Revelation must give some ultimate basis in which faith can lay its anchor.

Consequently, the researcher believes any Revelation that assumes ultimate reality to be a transcendent negative (as in non-dualism) or an immanent anything (as in pantheism or polytheism) offers no ground for rational faith. A transcendent negative equals nothing and an immanent anything is not only dispersive ground but also an attempt to pull oneself up by one's bootstraps, for human reality is itself co-immanent with everything else. Therefore, Revelation must provide a content to the transcendent ideal. As seen earlier, two necessary anchoring attributes of the transcendent must be personality and concern without which a meaningful *I-Thou* relationship is impossible. To say that the transcendent cannot be known is to obstruct the epistemics of divine reality. Further, in that sense, Revelation itself is no revelation at all: it reveals nothing but that nothing can be known. Therefore, it is argued Revelation must provide a positive, yet transcendental anchoring ground for faith.

Supernatural phenomena do not serve as data for rational fideism. Faith may wish to be strengthened by phenomenal religious experience of signs, wonders, visions, and miracles. However, supernatural phenomena in, of, and by themselves have no revelatory content to serve as unambiguous data for rational fideism. Such phenomena can serve as data for empirical epistemics but not for rational fideism; and the results of empirical epistemics have been discussed at length to conclude that it leads us nowhere beyond the horizons of *our* experience alone. Such empirical epistemics can ultimately lead only to some form of naturalism, even if qualified by the ideal of divinity. Further, there is no reason to doubt that the supernatural phenomena might be designed in such a way as to mislead humans. This possibility is heightened by the biblical proposition that the spirit-world is divided into two antagonistic kingdoms with a political system and strategies, of which one kingdom is all set for deceiving humanity to believe its lie. In such a case, it is almost or absolutely impossible for humans to really know whether he is being deceived or not. Thus, no supernatural phenomena, even religious experience such as visions of 'God', can be the grounds for the rational fideistic epistemics of divine reality. This has already been demonstrated earlier. It needs only to be added here that only when supernatural phenomena is given an interpretive revelatory content can it assume the status of 'proof', though in a relative sense; however, it can never assume the status of data for theologizing in the rational fideistic epistemics.

Rational fideism is not fusion epistemics. On the other hand, it is harmony epistemics. The only fusion possible is at the dispensing of the other. Harmony is the gaining of value not from within the system of contingent being but from without. Fusion, it has been seen, either leads to the attribution of the transcendental attributes to the empirical world or the contentment with the empirical attributes as constituting reality. Thus, reason, as in non-dualism, looks at all empirical reality as illusion, while experience sees the pluralistic and contingent nature of reality as self-evident and regards the concept of rational or metaphysical reality nonsensical, useless, and in Hume's words, consignable to the flames. Reason and experience cannot fuse together absolutely to form some new epistemics. However, they can be harmonized in their distinctions as distinct tones are harmonized in music. The question of rational fideism is whether any revelation can

provide such harmonizing content to resolve the paradoxical disharmony between reason and experience in the existential person. This also defines the inquiry of rational fideism.

Rational Fideism and Divine Reality

The results show that divine reality cannot be known except through a revelation of itself. For this to be possible, divine reality must at least be personal and concerned. Further, a knowledge of divine reality must not be either purely rational (in the sense that the rational attributes[565] are the divine attributes) or empirical (in the sense that the empirical attributes[566] are the divine attributes). If it is purely rational, then it would mean the negation of the empirical, as demonstrated by the arguments of both Zeno and Gaudapada. If it is purely empirical, then it would mean the negation of the rational, as demonstrated by the theological positions of animism, polytheism, pantheism, and panentheism; and the non-theological positions of skepticism, logical positivism, and mysticism.

A rational fideistic epistemics of divine reality expects the harmonizing of, but not fusion of, reason and experience. This means achieving a harmony of the rational-empirical attributes of unity-plurality, necessity-contingency, immutability-mutability, transcendence-immanence, and infinity-finitude. This means that the answer must come neither from reason nor from experience but from divine reality itself. In other words, if the divine doesn't communicate in words there is no way of knowing it. Rational fideism presupposes on the basis of a philosophical disapproval of rational epistemics and empirical epistemics that ultimate or divine reality cannot be known apart from the revelation of divine reality itself. This requires that God should be concerned enough to reveal Himself to mankind. This also means that God, in order to be the Object of faith, must *not only be absolute and rational in His essence,*[567] but also *empirical and 'visible' in His relation,* without which one cannot relate to God.

Thus, reason and faith come into stage; reason as the interpreter of revelation, and faith as the appropriator of revelation. This also means that revelation finds a recipient dimension in the subject. The recipient dimension is the existentiality of human reality. It is the subjective dimension of divine epistemics. Existentiality refers to the human concern and reflection on existence itself; *Being* becomes a concern for the human. Such a human is referred to as Being-as-care in this research work. The concern is reflected in the passion, thirst, and longing that is experienced in the existential emotions of emptiness, anxiety, boredom, rootlessness, and bewilderment. These existential emotions may be linked to the metaphysical disharmony between reason and experience, a condition that cannot be resolved by either but only by ultimate of divine reality. The revelation of divine reality, consequently, forms the objective

[565] *Viz.,* unity, necessity, immutability, transcendence, and infinity.
[566] *Viz.,* plurality, contingency, mutability, immanence, and finitude.
[567] Cf. Heraclitus' concept of the *Logos* as reason that governs the universe.

dimension of divine epistemics. The enquiry is rational fideistic in the sense that faith is seen as supported by reason and reason is seen as supported by faith. Reason can only function on the basis of faith, and faith can only *see* and understand with the aid of reason. Revelation, not experience, provides the data for the rational enquiry. Faith is also the thrust of human existentiality towards the discovery of the truth of divine reality. Faith brings subjective meaning. However, such subjective meaning would be anchorless if it had no absolute objective dimension to it. Further, doubt can lead to despair if faith is renounced. Therefore, a balance between the will-to-believe and the will-to-doubt must be achieved through the judgmental spirit of reason. Reason establishes the credibility of the objective dimension of faith, *viz.*, Revelation. Divine reality is seen to be both essentially and empirically rational and relational. The rational-empirical harmonization is understood by the existential nature of human faith. In divine reality, one finds the rational ground in which one can anchor one's faith and find both the rational and existential meaningfulness of life. Thus, rational fideism becomes the epistemics of harmony that seeks to ground the existential dimension of human reality in the objective dimension of divine reality based on and through the harmonious co-operation of reason and faith.

Each religion has its own revelation as inscribed in its own scriptures. It is not our concern here to study each of the various religious scriptures to come to the conclusion regarding divine reality. The purpose has been chiefly to provide a philosophical tool for theological enquiry. Illustrations of the existential application of the rational fideistic interpretation of biblical revelation have already been cited in the section of the subjective dimension of divine epistemics. Following is an illustration of how the rational-empirical paradox may be resolved in the biblical revelation of divine reality:

i. Unity-Plurality and Divine Tri-unity. The biblical God is essentially a unity-plurality that possibilizes his relationality. He is not a monad, nor is the God-head made up of three gods. On the other hand, the God-head is a trinity. Accordingly, oneness is the attribute of the three and threeness is the attribute of the one. Thus, the Trinity is seen as a harmony of both unity and plurality, in the sense that the Trinity is both a unity and a plurality. It is not one at the disposal of the other, but one in harmony with the other. The existential bond of the Divine Community is secured by Divine Love. The existential distinction is preserved by personality, the divine is three persons, which is the condition of love.

ii. Necessity-Contingency. God is essentially a necessary-contingent being which possibilizes his relationality. As necessary, God is absolute; as contingent, the three persons within the Godhead work in unamity and love. There is no egoistic centre. Contingency can be seen within the Holy Trinity in the sense that each person within the Divine Community is related to the other.

> The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand.
>
> …The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things

> soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.
>
> …the Spirit of truth…shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, *that* shall he speak: and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show *it* unto you.[568]

iii. Immutability-mutability. God is essentially immutable and dynamic which possibilizes his relationality. He is the eternally unchanging God. And yet, He 'comes down' to meet His people, He 'visits' the poor, He walks on the waves of the sea, and discourses with man in His inner being. The Bible begins with an acting God: 'In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.'[569] A God who works is a God in motion. God is certainly the God who doesn't change in essence. However, He is also the God who creates, repents, judges, and saves. The Incarnation is a major example of this. In the Incarnation God did not change in essence but still took on a permanent nature of the human. The Word *became* flesh doesn't mean that it was no longer Word but only flesh. The hypostatic union, in this case, secures both the divinity and the humanity of Christ. The noteworthy fact, however, is that the Word *became* flesh in some point in time and has remained so ever since. Thus, in essence God is unchanging but in His relation He is changing. He is essentially unchanging God who is dynamically active.

iv. Transcendence-Immanence. God is essentially a transcendent and yet immanent being which possibilizes his relationality. God is not only beyond the universe but also in the universe. He is not only Spirit but also the Omnipresent Spirit. He is not only the 'wholly Other', but also the 'wholly Present'; 'the mystery of the self-evident, nearer to me than my *I*.'[570] God is everywhere and yet not everything. God transcends the universe, He is not the universe. In contradistinction to the pantheistic and panentheistic position, the biblical God, in His essentiality, is not affected by any change in the universe since He also transcends it as Spirit.

v. Infinity-finitude. God is essentially infinite and finite which possibilizes his relationality. He is infinitely infinite and infinitely finite. Therefore, the infinitely finite division of space is not devoid of the personal presence of God. God is infinite in power yet He cannot do many things, like He cannot destroy Himself or be the cause of his own destructibility as in the polytheistic myth of Bhasmasur.[571] Also, He cannot sin, nor can He justify the wicked. Thus, He cannot do many things. The infinity of God, further, does not disallow the existence of the world. Neither is the infinity of God prevented by the existence of the world. Moreover, God is also seen as involved in temporal historical time and yet transcending the temporality of historical time.

[568] John 3: 35; 5: 19; 16: 13-14 (KJV)
[569] Genesis 1: 1 (KJV)
[570] Martin Buber, *I and Thou,* p. 79
[571] Bhasmasur, a demon, was given the boon of turning to ashes anything by laying of hands; however, he in turn attempted to lay his hands on the god who gave him the boon which made the god take to his heels to protect himself from destruction.

Thus, God is infinite, but not in the material sense, for that would be empirically impossible. He is spiritually infinite in being, power, and knowledge. However, He can involve Himself in the finite spatio-temporal world. He cannot be contained in a temple made of bricks and stones. But He is said to indwell the heart of a believer. Thus, in divine reality the infinite-finite find harmonious co-existence.

A few illustrations of Biblical theologizing by the existential application of the principles of rational fideism have already been given in the section on the subjective dimension of divine epistemics. Hopefully, such applications will eventually serve to unravel an understanding of the divine not just in the objective dimension but also in the subjective dimension. Thus, also hopefully, the objective cognizance of God will be met by a subjective anchoring in Him. And such anchoring will constitute the substantiality of the faith in divine reality which is not of things seen (empirical) but of things unseen. Thus, according to rational fideism, in matters of knowledge pertaining to divine reality, 'faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.'[572] Such a view of faith as not only existential but also rational will finally lead theology into a discovery of both subjective and objective meaningfulness in Revelation.

Conclusion

Space, time, being, and causality do pose great problems in metaphysics. Rationally, the clash of infinity and finitude involves a paradox. Empirically, the paradox is meaningless since reality is what it appears to be and not what reason stipulates it ought to be. Rational postulates are inapplicable to being; they are only applicable to propositions. Thus, unempirical metaphysics is nonsensical. To faith, however, Revelation as extra-empirical data provides an answer that harmonizes both reason and experience. As Brunner noted, thought divorced from Revelation cannot bear the paradox of conceptual and actual temporality.[573]

It has also been shown that faith is indispensable to any epistemics. Faith is the foundation of all knowledge and knowability. Reason has no reason to justify itself apart from reasoning itself. This means that unless reason believes in itself it cannot proceed at all. Likewise, unless experience is credible, one cannot proceed with certainty. Thus, faith is the foundation of knowledge and knowability. Since reason and experience are incapable of crossing their finite horizons in order to know ultimate reality, revelation is necessary. The particularity of Biblical Revelation is that it affirms the distinctiveness of divine reality from this-worldly-reality. There can be no rational or even empirical transition from the ultimate of this-worldly-reality to divine reality itself. This is only given in Revelation.

---

[572] Hebrews 11: 1 (KJV)

[573] Emil Brunner, *The Christian Doctrine of Creation and Redemption* (tr. Olive Wyon; Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1952), p.15

The quest for ultimate reality, however, must not be dissected from the existentiality of the seeker. Existential passions give birth to the philosophical quest for the absolute. The existential passions are governed by the inability to find a harmony in the noetic mechanism of experience and reason. This constitutes the subjectivity of man which Kierkegaard describes as infinite passion. One can either ignore this existential conflict by forgetting the transcendent through rigorous absorption in the immanent; however, for the intellectual soul, this only tends towards further vexation. Faith that is rationally consistent and subjectively satisfying provides meaning to life. Thus, rational fideism as the rational adventure of faith to harmonize the inner metaphysical conflict is argued as the best epistemic of divine reality.

CONCLUSION

It has been proved that the concept of divine reality obtained from rational epistemics is nothing but a reflection of the attributes of reason itself. The failure to relate the empirical to the rational led to the view that the empirical was not 'true' or 'real', for according to reason 'truth' is determined by its unity, necessity, immutability, transcendence, and universality (infinity). On the other hand, in empirical epistemics, nothing apart from experience could be true; therefore, plurality, contingency, mutability, immanence, and finitude ultimately characterized reality, and divine reality in order to be real had to be characterized by such. Thus, reason and experience seemed to be at poles apart and by virtue of themselves alone incapable of leading to any real knowledge of God.

Rational fideism harmonizes reason and experience in both the objective and subjective dimension of human knowledge. In the subjective dimension, faith as impelled by the turbulence of the reason-experience paradoxical situation seeks out for the harmonizing reality that would provide existential meaning to the human to whom existence has become an issue. Faith also provides the intuitive framework within which reason experiences knowledge. In the objective dimension, Revelation (*Sabda Pramana*) provides the ground in which faith is expected to cast its anchor and find solace for the soul. It is reason which ascertains the objective meaningfulness of Revelation. It is faith that experiences the subjective meaningfulness of Revelation. Thus, faith and reason are involved in the ascertainment of the subjective and objective meaningfulness of Revelation. The resultant knowledge of God, though not exhaustive, is at least epistemically harmonious. God is seen as both rational and empirical in character, while at the same time personal and concerned with human reality. God is both rational and relational. To quote one biblical illustration, God is both immutable and dynamic which possibilizes his relationality; for unless he is immutable he cannot be relied on, and unless he is dynamic he cannot be experienced. This relationality of God makes it possible for man to know God. If God possessed no possibility of relationality, then He could not be concerned with human reality so as to manifest Himself. This relationality also provides the basis for man to existentially relate himself to God, while God's essential rationality provides the anchoring ground for faith. This relationality shows that God is personal (for reciprocal relationship to be possible) and concerned. He is concerned with human reality; therefore He reveals Himself to man.

The rational attributes of God are: unity, necessity, immutability, transcendence, and infinity. The empirical attributes are basically: plurality, contingency, mutability, immanence, and finitude. An interpretation of Revelation, for instance the Bible, shows how, for instance, God is essentially one and yet tri-personal according to the doctrine of Trinity. It also gives further instances of attributes such as: love, joy, goodness, mercy, kindness, longsuffering, justice, righteousness, holiness, and faithfulness. The moral attributes of God constitute the moral ground of all moral acts and rules; thus, revelationally speaking, the moral and intrinsic nature of God is the ground of all morality. Teleological ethics attempts to ground morality in human or

social reality – the results good to such reality. Biblical deontology grounds morality in the very character of God. Thus, one cannot be good by recourse to good actions,[574] he can only be good by grounding himself in God who alone is essentially good.[575] The Adamic sin was to find the good with man at the center – what seems pleasant and good to man; Christ's righteousness consisted in making the Father's will the centre and ground of his life.[576] Thus, obedience to God's word and reverence, worship, and service of him constituted the essence of Christ's life that was grounded in divine reality.[577]

However, rational fideism doesn't vouch for a particular religion. It is trans-religionist. Its emphasis on the possibility of divine knowledge only through verbal testimony (Revelation) doesn't mean the competition of religious 'revelations'. Sometimes, that which is claimed to be a revelation is not a revelation at all, in the sense of being communicated by God to man. In non-dualism, for instance, revelation doesn't mean the communication of God to man. It only means discoveries of mystical insight, which might even be reckoned as rational interpretations of mystical experiences. In Buddhism, likewise, the 'revelatory content' is a discovery of the enlightened one. But, does this mean that such 'revelatory contents' be dismissed as not revelations of God but discoveries of men on the basis of reason and experience? The answer of rational fideism is no. In turn, one needs to seek whether any 'revelatory content' plays the role of an harmonizer between reason and experience, is rational and clear in meaning, and is meaningful to the existential human. It can be argued that this will only tend to permit the destruction of absolute revelation. Can't rational fideism be employed to prove anything? Of course, not. For instance, rational fideism anticipates the divine to be both transcendent and immanent. Obviously, this means the singular and unambiguous notion that the transcendent is also immanent and both be equally real. But this cannot be possible if the world were taken to mean the transcendent God; for in that case the phenomenal world would have to be regarded as not real but a 'dream' or delusion of the transcendent, which further intensifies the problem as to the cause of this delusive condition. Thus, any view cannot be considered to be compatible with the rational epistemic methodology. However, this doesn't mean that religions in general may have been barred of any true divine revelation.

Anthropological studies in primitive cultures have shown that Revelation may not be confined to just one group of people. Don Richardson, in his *Eternity in their hearts*, has pointed out the revelatory connectivity between God and humans in cultures around the world. He refers to 'the Unknown God' of Athens, relates it to the story of the prophet Epimenides, and shows how Paul accepted this concept of the Unknown God as referring to the Almighty God Himself. Likewise, traces of divine revelation were found among the Incas, the Santals, and the Gedeos of Ethiopia,

[574] Matthew 19: 16, 20
[575] Matthew 19: 17; John 15: 5
[576] John 4: 34
[577] Matthew 4: 4, 7, 10

the Chinese, the Koreans, the Africans, and several others. Among the Karens of Burma, says Richardson, there was a prophetic anticipation of the Written Word of God. Interestingly enough, the Karen called their Supreme God by the name of Y'wa,[578] which at least sounds similar to the YHWH of the Hebrews.

All such facts imply that one's own religion can serve as a beginning point for a rational fideistic analysis. For an Indian Christian, does that mean that Hinduism serves 'as a tutor to Christ' in the same way that to Clement of Alexandria Greek philosophy served 'as a tutor to Christ?'[579] That depends on the theological stand one takes with regard to world religions. For rational fideism, as a philosophical enterprise, however, systems of 'revelation' do not matter. The concept of Revelation in rational fideism is not of a closed one but of an open one. The existential anchoring of faith cannot occur in an objective reality that is neither personal nor concerned, in other words, that is not living in relation to 'me'. Therefore, Revelation cannot be regarded as closed but as open.

But what about the Christian proclamation of the finality of revelation in Christ? As a Christian teacher himself, the researcher doesn't find this to count against the 'open-revelation' hypothesis of rational fideism for the following reasons:

1. 'Open' means that Revelation is neither limited to any group or time; nor is it closed to rational investigation. Thus, though Christ is the finality of divine revelation, yet even this finality of revelation is not closed but 'open to reason.'[580] Jesus Himself said, 'If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not',[581] thus, inviting an investigation of His claims. And he didn't base his claims in separation from the testimony of Scriptures.[582]

2. The Holy Spirit as a living witness within the believer is considered to be the incessant revealer of divine things.[583]

3. There is no reason why 'the Spirit of Christ which was in' the prophets of old does not also at the present signify and testify about Christ.[584] There is also no reason to believe that the revelation of Christ was confined only to the Jewish prophets: Balaam was not a Jew and yet he prophesied about a Star out of Jacob.[585]

Thus, the rational fideistic study of the revelatory content in world religions can be expected to yield important insights into divine reality.

---

[578] Don Richardson, *Eternity in Their Hearts,* p. 74, 77, 78
[579] Sunand Sumithra, *Christian Theologies from an Indian Perspective* (Bangalore: TBT, 1990), p. 72
[580] James 3: 17 (RSV)
[581] John 10: 37
[582] John 5: 39
[583] 1 Corinthians 2: 10-12; 1 John 2: 27
[584] 1 Peter 1: 10-12
[585] Numbers 24: 17

In relation to the biblical revelation, rational fideism does provide an important tool for theologizing. A rationalistic approach to revelation, has been the result of consternation over the relational and empirical attributes of the divinity. For instance, biblical phrases like ‘God repented’ and ‘the Word became flesh’ posed problems for a rational understanding of the immutability of God. However, for rational fideism this is no longer a problem, for faith assumes the relationality of the divine which can only be possible if the divine initiates (a dynamic verb) His self-revealing. At the same time, faith expects an anchoring in the absolute, immutable, transcendent. Thus, the revelation of a God who is both transcendent and immanent, immutable and dynamic is not ‘meaningless’ to rational faith. Conceptualization of such a God might not be possible, however, this doesn’t mean that the revelatory content is inconsistent.

Theologically speaking, Barth and Brunner are right about the centrality of revelation in Christ, and that apart from Christ there is no revelation of God. However, this is far from assuming that God has not revealed Himself in non-Christian traditions. Philosophically speaking, however, any revelation can only assume rationality or the status of rational verifiability, when given in the form of verbal testimony. Thus, even one’s physical vision of Christ would be philosophically impertinent unless corroborated by a verbal testimony originating from God Himself. Mere subjectivity or relativity cannot share the philosophical panel. In the field of the philosophy of religion, it is absolute terms that matter. However, this does not overrule the common subjective and existential dimension of the human. As has been discussed, man’s search for the divine and the ultimate rises out of an internal tension between the infinite and the finite – which can only be resolved in a right knowledge of and relationship with divine reality.

Finally, the researcher is well assured that faith in God is rooted in the fact that God created man in His own image and likeness in order that man may participate in the divine life and nature of God. This, the researcher believes, is the theological basis for the thrust of faith that is impelled by the paradoxical disharmony of the existential and metaphysical human. However, the *logos* of God and the Spirit of Truth are the basis for the rationality of faith that one can find in divine revelation. This means that faith is neither blind nor irrational. Faith is the basis on which reason ventures out in search for truth. Faith is also the means by which reason appropriates the truth of God. Thus, faith and reason come into a meaningful relationship in rational fideism. This, the researcher believes will eventually help the Christian in seeing both subjective and objective meaningfulness in the revelation of God. But as a last note it must be asserted with all humility that

> …we know in part…but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears….Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

> And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.[586]

Until, He appears then, and we behold Him face to face, may faith become the anchor by which we lay our hope in the absolute God, who is the King immortal, invisible, the only God, to whom be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen!

[586] 1 Corinthians 13: 9-13 (NIV)

APPENDIX I

Example of an Application of the Rational Fideistic Method to the Problem of Divine Foreknowledge

Divine foreknowledge refers to God's possession of the knowledge of future. The problem is whether God's omniscience entails that He *actually* knows our future free actions. Rational fideism sees that the paradox is because of the distinct lines of rational and empirical epistemics by which theologians approach the issue. For instance, Norman Geisler in the rationalist way, and appealing to transcendence and infinity, argues that "An infinite, eternal God knows *what* we know but not in the *way* we know it. As an eternal being, God knows eternally.'[587] This kind of an approach, however, bears no meaning for an empiricist, since it refers to a non-empirical *way* of knowing. On the other hand, in the empirical way, Gregory A. Boyd has argued that God does not foreknow future free actions because there is '*nothing definite there for God to know'*.[588] In other words, knowledge entails a subject-object relation. However, since future free actions do not exist at the present, there is no reason to suppose that God's not knowing them implies He is not omniscient. He can only know what is really existent and future actions do not exist in relation to the present. This view, obviously, is a purely empirical approach to the problem. Thus, the problem of divine foreknowledge is a result of a clash of methodological perspectives: rational and empirical.

One way of solving this problem would be by asking whether knowledge is, in dimension, rational or empirical. If it is rational, then it must be in non-conflict with unity, transcendence, infinity, necessity, and immutability. However, if it is empirical, then it must be in non-conflict with plurality, immanence, finitude, contingency, and mutation. In the rational picture of God, knowledge is never thought as *acquired*, which assumes mutation. God doesn't *come to know*. Knowledge is static and devoid of subject-object relation; which also means that *there needn't be anything definite there for God to know* – He doesn't *come to know* in a subject-object relation but as unity. Knowledge, thus, is static and uniform not dynamic and plural. In that sense, 'foreknowledge' is with reference to us, humans, and not with reference to the divine perspective. Devoid of the Revelation of God as a distinct reality from this-worldly-reality, however, this rationality of ultimate reality can mean that the Divine has no *phenomenal* knowledge (or delusion).

It may be noted from the discussion on the rationalist non-dualism that omniscience is not an attribute applicable to the non-dual Self in whom all subject-object distinctions cease; consequently, the delusive influence of phenomenal knowledge is obliterated. From that point of view, then, logically the Absolute can know nothing *phenomenal*. However, this non-dualistic

[587] Steve Lewis, "The Implications of God's Infinity for "Open" Theism," (http://www.w3.org/TR)
[588] *Ibid.*

nature of the non-dual cannot be applied to the Christian notion of the Godhead which, by *grace of revelation*, has been able to see the divine as triune. Revelation has shown that the Godhead is transcended to and not synonymous with this-worldly-reality. And so, phenomena need not be assumed as an illusion. Thus, as transcending phenomenal reality and yet being the hypostasis of it (of all spatio-temporal existence), it is not irrational to suppose that for God, all knowledge is coterminous. For instance, He doesn't need to read a book page by page to know its contents: the knowledge of its contents are coterminous to Him.

In the empirical picture, however, knowledge is *acquired*. God does *come to know.* Knowledge is dynamic subject-object relation. The researcher believes that the statement 'God saw that it was good' (Genesis 1: 10) must be seen in the empirical perspective and not in the rational perspective. Does this mean that God cannot foreknow? Obviously not, for the rational dimension is uniform with knowledge. Then in what way is divine foreknowledge to be understood? How can God know and still come to know? The answer is that God knows in the non-temporal sense (as the transcendent hypostasis of temporality) and comes to know in the temporal sense (as immanent to temporality).

But, it may be argued that time does not exist apart from events; then in what sense can God be the ground of temporality and of the temporal events in a way that the events are coterminous to Him, even before the events come to be? The answer is that since all events, including free actions, are contingent upon the necessary being of God, and the being of God is essentially a unity (spatio-temporal divisibility being inapplicable to it); therefore, at least rationally speaking, contingent reality is never *accidental* to God. They are only accidental empirically speaking. Thus, from the contingent viewpoint of human reality, all events in the world are accidental. From the viewpoint of divine reality, all events in the world are not accidental. Does this mean that humans do not have freewill? Obviously, not. For contingency doesn't imply determinism. And of course, in the statement that 'God knows world-events, including human free actions, as coterminous,' it is implied that God knows it not as something He determines to be but something as it is, i.e., coterminous. The rational part of the argument may this far suffice.

However, the empirical part of the argument cannot be ignored. God is not just beyond the world but also within the world. Revelation tells us that He is not just immutable but also dynamic. He creates, destroys, informs, interferes, and saves. The biblical God is not the unconcerned, inactive homogenous reality 'out there.' He is a God with whom men have talked, walked, and had relations. This God is a person; a tri-personality. He listens to the cries of the poor and answers out of the whirlwind. He is the God of silence and the God of thunder. He is the God of human experience. He knows all things; yet seeks the true worshippers. He rejoices[589] and gets grieved.[590] Obviously, He is the God of paradoxes; but in Him, all paradoxes turn to 'wonder'

[589] Zephaniah 3: 17
[590] Genesis 6: 6

and ‘awe’, into ‘worship’ and ‘adoration’. Because, in His rationality and relationality does one find order and harmony for the human heart, a heart that is torn between the eternal and the temporal, a heart that can only find rest and solace in the arms of the eternal and yet personal and living God.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books

Abhishiktananda. *Prayer,* Delhi: ISPCK, 1989.

Ames, Edward Scribner. *The Psychology of Religious Experience,* New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1910.

Audi, Robert (Gen.ed.). *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy,* New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

Augustine. *The City of God,* tr. Marcus Dodsi, New York: The Modern Library, 1950.

Ayer, A. J. *The Problem of Knowledge*, Maryland: Penguin Books Inc., 1969.

Baba, Das Jivan. *Eternal Truth*, Delhi: Navdin Prakashan Kendra, 1995.

Baillie, John. *Our Knowledge of God,* London: Oxford University Press, 1952.

Baillie, John. *The Idea of Revelation in Recent Thought*, London: Oxford University Press, 1956.

Bambrough, Renford. *Reason, Truth and God,* London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1969.

Barth, Karl. *Anselm: Fides Quaerens Intellectum (Faith in Search of Understanding),* tr. Ian W. Roberson, Cleveland: Meridian Books, 1960.

Barth, Karl. *Evangelical Theology: An Introduction*, tr. Grover Foley, Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1963.

Barth, Karl. *The Humanity of God*, tr. John Newton Thomas, Richmond: John Knox Press, 1963.

Barth, Karl. *The Word of God and the Word of Man*, tr. Douglas Horton, New York: Harper & Brothers, 1957.

Bernard, Theos. *Hindu Philosophy*, Mumbai: Jaico Publishing House, 2003.

Berthold, Fred Jr. *The Fear of God: The Role of Anxiety in Contemporary Thought*, New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1959.

Binswanger, Ludwig. *Being-in-the-world,* tr. Jacob Needleman, New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1963.

Bloesch, Donald G. *Essentials of Evangelical Theology,* Vol. 1, New York: Harper & Row, 1978.

Boisen, A. T. *The Exploration of the Inner World,* New York: Harper & Brother, Publisher, 1936.

Bosley, Harold A. *The Philosophical Heritage of the Christian Faith*, Chicago: Willett, Clark & Company, 1944.

Boss, Medard. *Psychoanalysis and Daseinsanalysis,* tr. Ludwig B. Lefebre, New York: Basic Books, Inc. Publishers, 1963.

Boyd, Robin. *Indian Christian Theology,* Delhi: ISPCK, 1975, rev. edn.

Braithwaite, R. B. *An Empiricist's View of the Nature of Religious Belief,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1955.

Brierley, J. *Religion* and *Experience,* New York: Thomas Whittaker, 1906.

Broadie, Alexander (ed.). *The Cambridge Companion to the Scottish Enlightenment,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003

Brown, Colin. *Christianity and Western Thought,* vol. 1, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1990.

Brown, Colin. *Philosophy & The Christian Faith,* Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1968.

Brown, David. *A Guide to Religions,* Delhi: ISPCK, 1999, 8th edn.

Brunner, Emil & Barth, Karl. *Natural Theology,* London: Geoffrey Bles: The Centenary Press, 1946.

Brunner, Emil. *Revelation and Reason,* tr. Olive Wyon, Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1946.

Brunner, Emil. *The Divine-Human Encounter,* tr. Amandus W. Loos; Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1943

Buber, Martin. *I and Thou,* tr. Ronald Gregor Smith, New York: Collier Books, 1986, 2nd edn.

Bullock, Allan and Oliver Stallybrass. *The Harper Dictionary of Modern Thought*, NewYork: Harper & Row Publishers, 1977.

Chandler, Russell. *Understanding the New Age*, Dallas: Word Publishing, 1988.

Chapman, Colin. *The Case for Christianity*, Grand Rapids: Wm B. Eerdmans, 1981.

Christdhas, Abraham. *Contemporary Religious Movements,* Bangalore: Theological Book Trust, 2005.

Cox, Harvey. *The Seduction of the Spirit,* New York: Simon & Schuster, 1973.

Cragg, Gerald R. *The Church and the Age of Reason 1648-1789,* Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1977.

Dewey, John & Bentley, Arthur F. *Knowing and the Known*, Boston: Beacon Press, 1960.

Dewey, John. *The Quest for Certainty*, London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1930.

DeWolf, L. Harold. *The Case for Theology in Liberal Perspective,* Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1959.

Doniger, Simon. *Religion and Human Behavior,* New York: Association Press, 1954.

Durant, Will. *The Story of Philosophy*, New York: Washington Square Press, 1961.

Edwards, Paul (ed.). *The Encylopedia of Philosophy*, Vol. 6, New York: The Macmillan Company & The Free Press, 1967.

Erickson, Millard J. *Christian Theology,* Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1985.

Evans, C. Stephen. *Preserving the Person,* Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1977.

Farmer, Herbert H. *Revelation and Religion,* London: Nisbet & Co., Ltd., 1954.

Farquhar, J.N. *Modern Religious Movements in India,* London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1924.

Flew, Antony. *God and Philosophy*, London: Hutchinson & Co. Ltd., 1966.

Flewelling, Ralph Tyler. *Christ and the Dramas of Doubt*, New York: Eaton & Mains, 1913.

Fowler, James A. *Stages of Faith,* San Francisco: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1981.

Frazier, Allie M. *Issues in Religion,* Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1975, 2nd edn.

Geisler, Norman L. *Christian Apologetics,* Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1976.

Geisler, Norman L. *False Gods of Our Time,* Eugene: Harvest House Publishers, 1985.

Ghosh, Vijaya (ed.). *Tirtha*, New Delhi: CMC Ltd., 1992.

Gnanakan, Ken. *The Pluralistic Predicament*, Bangalore: Theological Book Trust, 1992.

Goleman, Daniel. *Emotional Intelligence,* New York: Bantam Books, 1996.

Gundry, Stanley N. & Johson, Alan F. (eds.). *Tensions in Contemporary Theology*, Chicago: Moody Press, 1976.

Hamilton, Michael P. (ed.). *The Charismatic Movement*, Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1975.

Hannay, Alastair & Marino, Gordon D. (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Kierkegaard*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.

Hartshorne, Charles. *Man's Vision of God (and the Logic of Theism),* Hamden: Archon Books, 1964.

Hawking, Stephen A. *A Brief History of Time*, London: Bantam Books, 1997.

Hegel, G.W.F. *Reason in History*. tr. Robert S. Hartman; New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc, 1953.

Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich. *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, trs. Rev. E. B. Speirs & J. Burdon Sanderson, Vol. 1, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1962.

Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich. *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, trs. Rev. E. B. Speirs & J. Burdon Sanderson, Vol. 2, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1962.

Heidegger, Martin. *Being and Time*, London: SCM Press Ltd, 1962.

Hembron, Timotheas. *The Santals: Anthropological-Theological Reflections on Santali and Biblical Creation Traditions,* Calcutta: Punthi Pustak, 1996.

Hick, John (ed.). *Philosophy of Religion,* Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1970, 2nd edn.

Hicks, Peter. *Evangelicals and Truth,* Leicester: Apollos, 1998.

Hillerbrand, Hans (ed). *The Reformation,* Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1972

Hocking, William Ernest, *Types of Philosophy,* New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1929.

Hospers, John. *An Introduction to Philosophical Analysis.* New Delhi: Allied Publishers Limited, 2001.

Hume, David. *Enquiries Concerning the Human Understanding and Concerning the Principles of Morals,* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1902.

Hunnex, Milton D. *Charts of Philosophies & Philosophers,* Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1986.

James, William. *The Varieties of Religious Experiences,* New York: Collier Books, 1961.

Jeyaraj, Jesudason Baskar. *Christian Ministry.* Bangalore: Theological Book Trust, 2002.

Jones, E. Stanley. *Christ at the Round Table,* New York: The Abingdon Press, 1928.

Jr. Berthold, Fred. *The Fear of God,* New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1959

Kant, Immanuel. *Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone*, tr. Theodore M. Greene & New York: Basic Books, Inc. Publishers, 1963.

Kant, Immanuel. *The Critique of Pure Reason*, tr. Norman Kemp Smith; http://www.hkbu.edu.hk/~ppp/cpr/toc.html, 1985, 2nd edn.

Kaplan, Justin D. (ed.), *The Pocket Aristotle,* tr. W. D. Ross, New York: Pocket Books, 1958.

Katha Upanisad, tr. Swami Gambhirananda, Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1996.

Kelsey, Morton T. *Tongue Speaking: An Experiment in Spiritual Experience*, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1964.

Kisku, D. Barka. *The Santals and Their Ancestors,* Dumka: Hihiri Pipiri, 2000.

Koch, Kurt E. *Masih aur Shaitan ke Beech,* Hindi translation of *Between Christ and Satan,* Faridabad: Sabina Printing Press, 1999.

Kreeft, Peter and Tacelli, Ronald. *Handbook of Christian Apologetics,* Crowborough: Monarch, 1994

Krishnan, O. N. *In Search of Reality,* Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 2004.

Kundson, Albert C. *The Doctrine of God,* New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1930.

Küng, Hans. *Does God Exist?* Tr. Edward Quinn; New York: Vintage Books, 1980.

Ladd, George Trumball. *What Can I Know?* New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1917.

Liebman, Joshua Loth. *Peace of Mind,* New York: Simon and Schuster, 1946.

Lloyd-Jones, David Martyn. *God the Holy Spirit*, Illinois: Crossway Books, 1997.

Loew, Cornelius. *Modern Rivals to Christian Faith*, Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1956.

Madhavananda, Swami. *Minor Upanishads,* Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1996.

Malet, André, *The Thought of Rudolf Bultmann,* tr. Richard Strachan, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1971.

Mandukya Upanishad, with the Karika of Gaudapada and the Commentary of Sankaracarya, tr. Swami Gambhirananda, Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1995.

Mangalwadi, Vishal. *The World of Gurus,* Mumbai: GLS Publishing, 1999, Rev. edn.

Matczak, Sebastian A. *Karl Barth on God: The Knowledge of Divine Existence,* New York: St. Paul Publications, 1962.

May, Rollo. *Love and Will.* New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1969.

Mc Connell, Francis J. *The Diviner Immanence,* New York: Eaton & Mains, 1906.

McGiffert, Arthur Cushman. *A History of Christian Thought*, Vol. 2, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1950.

McGrath, Alister E. *Christian Theology,* Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 1996, 2nd edn.

McGrath, Alister E., *The Making of Modern German Christology 1750-1990,* Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1993, 2nd edn.

Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia, Microsoft Corporation, 2001.

Migliore, Daniel L. *Faith Seeking Understanding*, Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1991.

Mishra, Dr. Hridaynarayan, *Paschatya Darshan Ki Samasyaye*, Allahabad: Shekhar Prakashan, 2003.

Mitchel, Basil (ed.). *Faith and Logic*, London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1958.

Mueller, David L. *Karl Barth*, Texas: Word Books, Publisher, 1975.

Nash, Ronal H. *Faith and Reason,* Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1988.

Nivedita, Sister. *Religion and Dharma*, Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1989.

Noebel, David A. *Understanding the Times* Eugene: Harvest House Publishers, 1994.

Nongsiej, Tloyen. *Khasi Cultural Theology,* Delhi: ISPCK, 2002.

Oden, Thomas C. *The Living God,* San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987.

Otto, Rudolf. *Mysticism East and West*, trs. Bertha L. Bercey & Richena C. Payne, New York: The Macmillan Company, 1960.

Otto, Rudolf. *The Idea of the Holy*, tr. John W. Harvey, New York: Galaxy Book, 1958.

Pandey, Durgadutt. *Paschim Ke Aadhunik Darshanik*, Allahabad: India Book Agency, 2001.

Pathil, Kuncheria (ed.), *Religious Pluralism*, Delhi: ISPCK, 1999.

Perry, Marvin. *Western Civilization*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2001, 4th edn.

Pirouet, Louise. *Christianity Worldwide*, Delhi: ISPCK, 1996, 4th edn.

Plato, *The Republic and Other Works,* tr. B. Jowett, New York: Anchor Books, 1989.

Pols, Edward. *Whitehead's Metaphysics: A Critical Examination of Process and Reality,* Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1967.

Prince, Derek. *They Shall Expel Demons,* Christchurch: Derek Prince Ministries, 1998.

Radhakrishnan S. *Living with a Purpose*, Delhi: Orient Paperbacks, 2004.

Radhakrishnan, S. *Bhartiya Sanskriti,* tr. Shriramnath 'Suman', Delhi: Rajpal & Sons, 1996.

Radhakrishnan, S. *Satya Ki Khoj*, Delhi: Rajpal & Sons, 1996.

Ramakrishna. *Teachings of Sri Ramakrishna*, Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1994.

Renou, Louis (ed.). *Hinduism,* New York: George Braziller, 1962.

Richardson, Don. *Eternity in Their Hearts,* California: Regal Books, 1981.

Richter, Peyton E. & Fogg, Walter L. *Philosophy Looks to the Future,* Illinois: Waveland Press, Inc., 1978, 2nd edn.

Ricoeur, Paul. *The Symbolism of Evil,* tr. Emerson Buchanan, Boston: Beacon Press, 1967.

Ross, James. *Reason and Reliance: Adjusted Prospects for Natural Theology*, http://www.w3.org/TR/REC-html40.

Rush, Fred. *The Cambridge Companion to Critical Theory*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

Russell, Bertrand. *ABC of Relativity,* London: Routledge, 2002.

Schaeffer, Francis A. *Escape From Reason* Illinois: Inter-Varsity Press, 1968.

Schaeffer, Francis A. *The God Who is There*, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1968.

Schilling, S. Paul. *God Incognito,* Nashvile: Abingdon Press, 1974.

Schmitt, Richard. *Martin Heidegger on Being Human (an Introduction to Sein Und Zeit),* New York: Random House, 1969.

Seeling, Carl et.al. *Albert Einstein: Ideas and Opinions*, New Delhi: Rupa & Co., 2002.

Seth, Shyam Kishore & Mishra, Dr. Neelima. *Gyan Darshan (Philosophy of Knowledge),* Allahabad: Lokbharti Prakashan, 2000.

Shah, Ashwin J. *Glimpses of World Religions*, Mumbai: Jaico Publishing House, 1957.

Sharma, Laxminidhi. *Dharma Darshan Ki Roop Rekha*, Allahabad: Abhivyakti Prakashan, 2000.

Sinari, Ramakant. *Reason in Existentialism,* Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1966.

Singer, C. Gregg. *From Rationalism to Irrationality*. New Jersey: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1979.

Singh, Dr. Nilima. *Nietzsche: Zarathustra ne Kaha,* Delhi: Hind Pocket Books, 2004.

Singh, Dr. Nilima. *Sartre: Shabdon Ka Masiha,* Delhi: Hind Pocket Books, 2004.

Singh, Narendra. *A Christian Theology of Religions*, Bangalore: SAIACS Press, 2005.

Sivananda, Swami. *Essence of Principal Upanishads*, Tehri-Garhwal: Divine Life Society, 1997.

Sproul, R. C. *Reason to Believe,* Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1978.

Srimad Bhagvad-Gita, tr. Swami Vireswarananda, Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1974.

Stumpf, Samuel Enoch. *Socrates to Sartre*, New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1988.

Sumithra, Sunand. *Christian Theologies from an Indian Perspective,* Bangalore: Theological Book Trust, 1990.

Swartz, Norman. *Beyond Experience: Metaphysical Theories and Philosophical Constraints.*, www.sfu.ca/philosophy/beyond_experience/index.htm, 2001, 2nd edn..

Swinburne, Richard. *Faith and Reason,* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981.

Synan, Vinson. *The Century of the Holy Spirit,* Nashville: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 2001.

Teachings of Sri Ramakrishna, Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1994.

The Brhadaranyaka Upanisad, tr. Swami Madhavananda, Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1997.

The Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Vol. 7, USA: Crowell Collier & Macmillan Inc., 1967.

Thompson, Bard. *Humanists and Reformers*, Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdman's, 1981.

Tillich, Paul. *The Shaking of the Foundations,* New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1940.

Tirkey, C. A. B. *Religion, Primal Religions,* Delhi: ISPCK., 1998.

Unger, Merrill F. *The Haunting of Bishop Pike,* Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, 1971.

Victor E. Frakl, *Man's Search for Meaning,* tr. Ilse Lasch, Mumbai: Better Yourself Books, 1964.

Vidler, Alex R. *The Church in the Age of Revolution,* Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1978.

Vroom, Hendrik M. *Religions and the Truth,* tr. J. W. Rebel, Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1989

Whitehead, Alfred North. *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology,* New York: The Free Press, 1975.

Wildersmith, A. Eanest. *God: To be or not to be?* Neuhasusen-Stuttgart: TELOS-International, 1975.

Williams, J. Rodman. *The Era of the Spirit,* New Jersey: Logos International, 1971.

Williams, J. Rodman. *Renewal Theology*, Grand Rapids: Academie Books, 1988.

Williams, John Alden (ed.). *Islam,* New York: George Braziller, 1962.

Wilson, Bruce. *The Human Journey,* Palm Springs: Ronald N. Haynes Publishers, Inc., 1981.

Woodhouse, Mark B. *A Preface to Philosophy,* 5th edn, Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1993.

Work, Worship, Witness, Bangalore: Theological Book Trust, 2003.

Wurmbrand, Richard. *In God's Underground*, London: W.H. Allen & Company, 1968.

Wuthnow, Robert. *Rediscovering the Sacred*, Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1992.

Young, Warren C. *A Christian Approach to Philosophy* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1954.

Zachariah, Aleyamma. *Modern Religious and Secular Movements in India*, Bangalore: Theological Book Trust, 2002.

Zacharias, Ravi. *Deliver Us From Evil*, USA: Wpublishing Group, 1997.

Zukav, Gary. *The Dancing Wu Li Masters*, New York: Bantam Books, 1979.

Articles

"Animism," http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Animism.

"Chi," *Alternative Healing Dictionary*, http://www.reiki.nu/treatment/healing/dictionary.

"Evidence of Survival," http://www.philosophyonline.co.uk/pages/life.htm.

"Faith and Reason," http://www3.baylor.edu/~Scott_Moore/handouts/

"Martin Heidegger," *The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, http://www.utm.edu/research/iep/h/heidegge.htm.

"Ontological Arguments," *Standford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/ontological-arguments.

"Otto on the Numinous," http://academic.brooklyn.cuny.edu/english/melani/gothic/

"Otto's 'Idea of the Holy': Summary," http://www.bytrent.demon.co.uk/otto1.html.

"Parmenides: Stage 1," http://faculty.washington.edu/smcohen/320/parm1.htm

"Peepal Tree," http://www.gurjari.net/ico/Mystica/html/peepal_tree.htm.

"Psychology of Religion," http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Psychology_of_religion.

"Tribal Religions," http://www.unexplainedstuff.com/Afterlife-Mysteries/Tribal-Religions.html.

"Tulsi," http://www.gurjari.net/ico/Mystica/html/tulsi.htm.

"Zeno of Elea," http://www.utm.edu/research/iep/z/zenoelea.htm

"Zeno's Paradoxes," http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/paradox-zeno/

Atmananda, Swami. "Six Pramanas," http://www.vmission.org/vedanta/articles/pramanas.htm.

Hefner, Alan G. and Guimaraes, Virgilio. "Animism," http://www.themystica.com/mystica/articles/a/animism.htm.

Hurley, Patrick J. "Introduction to Logic," http://www2.austincc.edu/rloverin/IntroductiontoLogic.htm.

Nielson, Kai. "The Primacy of Philosophical Theology," http://theologytoday.ptsem.edu/jul1970/v27-2-article3.htm.

Posy, Dr. Carl. *Philosophy of Mathematics*, http://www.cs.washington.edu/homes/gjb/doc/philmath.htm.

Ross, Kelly L. "Religious Value and the Antinomies of Transcendence," http://www.friesian.com/antinom.htm.

Smith, Robin. "Aristotle's Logic," http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/aristotle-logic.

Sudduth, Michael C. "Plantinga's Revision of the Reformed Tradition: Rethinking Our Natural Knowledge of God," http://www.homestead.com/philofreligion/files/WCBSymposiumPaper.